

Guidance on areas for negotiation and agreement with partners

This section outlines the areas which need to be taken into consideration in the development of an educational partnership, although not all will be relevant for every type of partnership arrangement.

Early negotiation and discussion of these areas with the partner will help both parties to reach a common understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities and inform the development of the [Student Lifecycle Table](#) required for Programme Approval ([or the Joint/ Dual PhD Student Lifecycle Table](#)) and the finalisation of the legal Agreement.

1. Regulatory Arrangements

The University and the partner organisation should identify at an early stage any requirement to seek local approval for the proposed programme. Both parties should co-operate and provide the necessary information to ensure that the relevant approval(s) are secured prior to the commencement of the educational partnership.

2. Mechanisms for the Management of the partnership and programme(s)

At an early stage it is important to discuss the structure for the management of the programme in question and the wider partnership relationship. In particular discussion should take place on:

- Structures for managing the programme
- Structures for managing the partnership
- Structures for delivering on the partnerships operationally

A named contact should be identified at each partner to lead on the management of the programme for all types of partnership.

Any committees put in place to help manage the programme and partnership should have appropriate links back to the Newcastle based support structure.

3. Publicity and Marketing

The University requires that it maintains control of publicity and marketing materials, particularly where these are published by a partner organisation. The University will seek to ensure that publicity and marketing materials avoid:

- Misleading statements about the collaboration particularly in relation to what student entitlements (e.g. guaranteeing entry to Newcastle)
- Misleading statements about recognition of awards by public or other authorised bodies
- Misleading advice about the recognition of awards by professional bodies or bodies in other countries;
- Inappropriate or misleading comparisons with other providers;
- Derogatory statements about other providers;
- Bringing UK Higher Education into disrepute.

The University and partner should agree the mechanism by which the approval of marketing materials is carried out prior to publication. Arrangements should be put in place for the on-going monitoring of publicity materials.

The Educational Partnerships Sub-Committee will receive an annual update on marketing materials for educational partnerships programmes.

4. **Recruitment and Admissions**

Responsibility for recruitment and admission depends on the type of arrangement. For entry to programmes which lead to a Newcastle University award the requirements should at the least meet the normal entry requirements in the subject area, including any English Language requirement.

5. **Enrolment and Registration**

The University and partner should agree on how students will be enrolled onto the programme. In cases such as validations and articulation students are normally enrolled and registered by the partner organisation.

For joint awards the partners will have to agree whether students are registered at one or all the partners. For UK joint awards the partners should agree who will be responsible for making the required statutory returns (e.g. to HESA and HEFCE).

Where the partner organisation is responsible for enrolment and registration, a mechanism through which it can report regularly to the University on the number of students registered on the programme and their progression status is needed.

6. **Information for Students**

The University requires that students are given accurate and comprehensive information about the programme.

All students should receive a Degree Programme Handbook outlining the support services available to them either through the University or the partner and how to access these. The [guidelines for the production of the degree programme handbooks](#) provide an outline of the information that must be made available.

The University requires that documentation for all educational partnerships should include:

- Information about the arrangement and the responsibilities of the parties involved;
- Information on the opportunities for student to use the University's learning and other resources;
- Information on the complaints and appeals procedure;
- Named contact details at the University and the partner organisation,

In the cases of international partnerships the following is required:

- Details of the recognition of the programme or award in other countries or by public and regulatory bodies in the UK and elsewhere;
- Information on the expectations of the UK Higher Education study;
- Information on the UK Visa and Immigration requirements.

For articulation arrangements the following information should be made clear to students:

- Information on progression requirements to Newcastle degrees;
- Information on application process and details of fees payable to the University
- Whether or not the arrangement leads to a dual award.

Students should be made aware of the Student Charter at an early stage and how this impacts them.

7. Discipline, Complaints and Appeals

The University and the partner should reach a common understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities in relation to student discipline, complaints and appeals procedures. A set of [Principles for Educational Partnerships and Student Casework is available](#).

Discipline and complaints procedures are normally handled by the institution with whom the student is primarily registered.

All students who are studying for a Newcastle University award have access to the University's appeals procedures.

Students at registered at a partner may also bring a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) following the issue of a completion of procedures letter from the awarding body.

8. Assessment Procedures

There must be clarity about responsibility for assessment related matters. These responsibilities are likely to vary according to the type of educational partnership.

Each party must be clear where responsibility lies for:

- Setting the assessment;
- Responsibility for organisation and conduct of examinations;
- Marking and moderation;
- Arrangement and membership of Board of Examiners
- Communication of results to appropriate bodies and students.

It is expected that all programmes leading to a Newcastle University award will follow the prevailing assessment and feedback policies. Any deviation from these will require an exemption approved by the relevant FLTSEC.

9. Quality Management

1. Board of Studies

Depending on the nature of the partnership the normal expectation is that there will be a joint Board of Studies responsible for the overall management of the programme. Membership will include representatives of all institutions involved in the partnership.

In cases where the programmes are similar to Newcastle based programmes it is suggested that these report to the same board. If a specific Board of Studies for the collaborative programme is held reporting mechanisms to the Newcastle based Board of Studies is required.

The terms of reference of the Board of Studies should be the same or similar to those for Boards of Studies at the University and carry out the same review processes outlined in the [schedule](#).

2. External Examiners

It is the responsibility of the University, when it is making an award, to appoint an external examiner, irrespective of whether all or part of the programme is delivered by a

collaborative partner (or partners). A minimum standard applies to external examining arrangements for programmes that are the subject of an educational partnership and the costs arising from the following requirements should be build into the business case for the proposal:

- i) Where appropriate, external examiners should be the same as those overseeing similar programmes delivered at Newcastle so that they can ensure comparability of standards. If separate examiners are used (e.g. for dual awards or another institution's modules included on Newcastle programmes), arrangements should be made to bring together the judgements of the different examiners regarding the standards of the programmes, i.e. the Newcastle Board of Studies should consider, and respond to the reports of all examiners;
- ii) the external examiner(s) must visit the partner institution in the first year of appointment, and a minimum of once every three years thereafter;
- iii) the Agreement should set out the need for the Newcastle external to sample review some of the partner's assessment and what that sample would consist of. This is not required for a UK partner once their quality management processes have been considered as equivalent and appropriate (in these cases a copy of their external examiner report going to the Newcastle BoS would suffice);
- iv) any costs of travel and/or translation must be borne by the Newcastle school or by the partner (depending on what is agreed when the partnership is established, and specified in the Agreement);
- v) The use of external examiners for maintaining and enhancing quality and standards is not commonplace in many countries and is one area where further information on this area of practice may be required to aid the partners' understanding of the role;

The extent to which a collaborative partner becomes involved in aspects of the process is a matter for the University to determine with the partner. Such arrangements will be explicitly covered in the Memorandum of Agreement setting out the partnership arrangements

3. Monitoring and Review

For programmes leading to a Newcastle University award the University's standard monitoring and review process will be expected. Partner participation in all processes is an important step in an open and transparent relationship.

4. Student Representation and Feedback

Mechanisms should be put in place to ensure that students on educational partnership provision have access to similar opportunities as on-campus students. Full information on the Student Representation Policy can be accessed [here](#).

Academic Units should ensure that there is appropriate student representation from educational partnership programmes on either existing Staff-Student Committees or through the establishment of a dedicated SSC.

Agreement on the details of how this will work in practice will require negotiation to ensure that the reporting lines and feedback to all students takes place and is appropriate.

10. Graduation Certificates and Transcripts

In cases where the University is the awarding body, the University is responsible for ensuring that certificates and transcripts are accurate and that they are only issued to those who have satisfied the assessment and examination requirements for the award.

Chapter B10: Managing Higher Education Provision with Others of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education states that the certificate and/or the transcript should record the name and location of any partner organisation engaged in delivery of the programme of study.

In Newcastle University's case for partners with degree awarding powers participating in a joint/dual degree arrangement the partner's logo and information will appear on the parchment with further detail available in the transcript. Agreement will have to be reached on the format of the parchment at an early stage of the arrangement.

For partnerships where the University is the sole awarding body student's will receive award identical to Newcastle programmes and the information relating to the partner and location will be provided in the transcript/HEAR.

11. Financial Arrangements

The University and the partner need to agree the financial arrangements for the relationship. These arrangements should:

- Comply with statutory and funding council requirements, including the requirement that overseas provision should not be cross-subsidised by HEFCE funding;
- Provide for the recording and accounting of all transactions in connection with the transfer of funds between the University and the partner organisation;
- Which provide safeguards so that, in the event of changes in the financial environment, academic standards and the interests of students are protected;
- Where appropriate in overseas provision, which cover contingencies for dealing with currency fluctuations, including meeting obligations to students adversely affected by changes.

12. Legal arrangements

The University normally requires that disputes be resolved within the jurisdiction of English law, although it reserves the right to take action in any other jurisdiction. Guidance is available on this issue from Research and Enterprise Services.

13. Staff Development and Training

Depending on the nature of the partnership staff development activities for both Newcastle and partner staff may be required. If this is the case, early discussion with the Staff Development Unit should be undertaken to explore the possible types of activity available.

Responsibility for payment for any staff development activity should be identified and appropriately costed in the business case.

14. Employment Issues.

In most educational partnerships it is unlikely that any employment issues will arise, however, this will not be the case in the development of Newcastle University overseas ventures such as NuMED and NUIS. To address this the University has development three models for the operation of Newcastle international operations, which are:

- Local appointment
- International appointment
- UK based expatriates

Additionally Human Resources have developed an Employee Lifecycle Grid which aims to assist managers in considering detailed aspects of staffing overseas ventures based on the three models.

Further information and guidance can be provided at:

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/hr/recruitment/assignments.php> and by the [HR Policies and Projects Team](#)

15. Language(s) of instruction and assessment

The language of instruction and assessment will normally be in English.

<p>Guidance owned and maintained by LTDS. Updated 2 September 2015 Approved by ULTSEC 18 October 2012.</p>	
<p>Intended for use by:</p>	<p>Proposers of new partnerships Degree Programme Directors of existing partnerships School Administrators Faculty Learning and Teaching Support Teams Research and Enterprise Services International Office</p>
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