



Brunel
University
London

Managing Partnerships: Code of Practice

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1. Part A: Introduction

All higher education providers are expected to have procedures in place for 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*”. ([UK Quality Code for Higher Education Chapter B10: Managing Higher Education Provision with Others](#))

This Code of Practice is informed by, and is consistent with, the UK Quality Code for Higher Education Chapter B10 expectation that the University takes “*ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, irrespective of where these are delivered or who provides them*”, and also takes into consideration the Quality Assurance Agency’s ‘Qualifications Awarded by Two or More Degree-Awarding Bodies Characteristics’ (2015).

This Code of Practice:

- defines the types of partnership agreements approved for use at Brunel University London;
- describes the process for establishing, approving, managing and evaluating, and terminating partnership agreements;
- provides advice and guidance for staff who wish to develop partnership agreements.

Definition of Partnerships

An arrangement whereby learning opportunities are provided to students in partnership with another party, and which leads to an award of Brunel University London.

Governance Arrangements

The University’s governance of collaborative provision is set out in [Senate Regulation 7](#).

This mandatory Code of Practice, approved by Senate, ensures that the University is able to discharge effectively its responsibilities for the academic

standards of its awards and the quality of learning opportunities provided for students with a partner.

College Management Boards approves the business case for partnerships proposals within colleges. These proposals are considered and approved by the Strategic Approval Scrutiny Panel (SASP) on behalf of the Education Strategy Committee (ESC). The University Education Committee (UEC) approves the proposed programme delivery, and has oversight of the management of partnerships. **Final approval of any partnership is granted by Senate.**

Partnership Strategy

[BRUNEL UNIVERSITY LONDON 2030 - VISION](#)

[UNIVERSITY EDUCATION STRATEGY](#) (authorised users only)

[UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY](#) (authorised users only)

[ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT](#)

Strategic alignment with goals including:

- enhancing Brunel's international standing;
- developing and furthering the international footprint of the institution;
- facilitating access and progression routes to Brunel programmes;
- expanding opportunities for postgraduate study at Masters and doctoral levels;
- enhancing the student learning experience by sharing good practice and by enriching the curriculum with global perspectives;
- encouraging research and business links, in line with the University's position as a research-intensive institution;
- enhancing staff development both at Brunel and at partner institutions;
- supporting diverse income streams for the University.

The process seeks to ensure that all partnerships meet the following criteria:

- a clear contribution to the delivery of the University's strategic objectives as expressed in the Strategic Plan;
- adequate resources are committed to the partnership by Colleges and other areas of the University;
- legal, ethical and financial risks are satisfactorily assessed;
- matters of academic quality and governance are satisfactorily addressed;

- it is fully supported by the College/Department/Division that will deliver it.

Key Enablers

From initiation to termination the life-cycle of a partnership is sustained by an iterative process between the College, the Academic Lead and stakeholders across the University. For a partnership to be successfully delivered, the following key enablers have been identified:

- The College fully supports and drives the partnership.
- The Academic Lead owns the relationship with the Partner and acts as the point of contact for any queries. The Academic Lead is accountable for the Partnership.
- The partnership agreement (or contract) is the central focus of a shared understanding of obligations, roles and responsibilities. It is a “living” document to be shared and updated as needed and required.
- The Academic Partnerships Office supports the College and the Academic Lead to ensure compliance with University regulations and policies.
- Communication across the University between key stakeholders: College, Academic Lead, Vice Deans Education and International, International Strategy Manager, Academic Partnerships Office, Marketing & Recruitment, Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Legal & Finance, SITS & TAG.
- Collaborative practices are essential in order to complete the proposal, steer it through the decision making process in a timely manner, and produce the best outcomes for both the College and the University.

Types of Partnership

- **Joint Delivery Programmes:** refers to the joint delivery of a Brunel programme with a partner organisation, including Flying Faculty and Off-Site agreements.
- **Articulation (with Advanced Standing):** refers to the admission of students from partner institutions directly onto advanced stages (for example Level 2 of an Undergraduate programme or term 2 of a postgraduate Masters programme) of agreed programmes. In all cases, the Brunel award is based only on the work undertaken as a student at Brunel.
- **Embedded College:** A private organisation (often part of a network of colleges) operating near to, or within, the University premises, usually engaged in the provision of programme elements that are validated and overseen by the University. Embedded College provision, where it is integrated into Brunel programmes, will be validated by the University using standard University approval processes. Requirements for validation will be specified in the agreement. The University has one Embedded College, [LBIC](#), which provides Alternative Pre-Masters, Foundation and Level 1 programme elements for Brunel students.
- **Exchange/ Study Abroad (outgoing):** refers to agreements where Brunel students study at a partner institution for a defined period of time and where grades/marks are imported under a defined set of rules into the student's Brunel profile. For all policy and process documentation pertaining to Exchange opportunities, please click [here](#).

Current Agreements

A list of current Agreements including Partnerships, Collaborations, and Exchange and Study Abroad programmes is available from [here](#). This list of Agreements is updated on a regular basis and managed by the Academic Partnerships Office.

Awards made in partnership:

- **Single Award:** describes an arrangement under which students study under a partnership towards the achievement of a Brunel award.
- **Dual Award:** describes partnerships under which two or more awarding institutions together provide programmes leading to separate awards being granted by both, or all of them.
- **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.

Other types of 'working with others':

The UK Quality Code for Higher Education Chapter B10 applies to the management of all learning opportunities leading or contributing to a Brunel award. The following types of arrangements that also fall under Chapter B10 are covered by other University regulations and procedures and are not considered in this Code of Practice:

- Placement learning;
- Professional work-based learning.

For further information regarding the University's management of placement learning, please see the [Placement Learning Policy](#) and [Managing Higher Education with Others](#).

The following types of agreements are not covered by the Expectation of Chapter B10 and are not considered in this Code of Practice:

- Financial agreements;
- Admission agreements with institutions preparing students for university entry, and whose students may apply to the beginning of a programme at Brunel (sometimes referred to as 'Ab Initio Articulation');
- [Study Abroad \(incoming\)](#).

2. Part B: Establishing Partnerships

Process Overview and Time Frame

Partnership proposals can originate from various sources: senior management, Colleges, individuals or prospective partner institutions. In all cases, the same complete lifecycle management process should be followed.

Anyone considering developing a partnership proposal should contact in the first instance the Vice Dean International and the University's Academic Partnerships Office (APO). The APO will offer guidance regarding the process and requirements to prepare a submission for approval. The proposer must prepare an Initial Proposal to ensure that all important aspects of the proposed collaboration are captured. A template for this purpose has been developed and is available from [here](#).

Any proposal must have the support of the relevant Department Management Board ('DMB') and College Management Board ('CMB'), and Colleges/Departments/Divisions are therefore asked to identify both a Partnership Sponsor who will be tasked with championing the proposal, and an Academic Lead who will be tasked with gathering information and preparing the business case documentation in collaboration with the proposed partner.

Once appointed, the Academic Lead will own the relationship with the Partner, acting as the point of contact for any queries. The Academic Lead will work closely with the APO and the Vice Dean International to ensure the partnership is managed appropriately throughout its life-cycle.

The approval of new partnership agreements may be a lengthy process and appropriate time should be allowed for new developments to go through all of the necessary scrutiny and governance structures. Anyone discussing potential partnerships with a partner institution should ensure that the prospective partner is aware of these requirements.

Please note that for any proposed joint award, the Academic Registrar and Director of Student Services must be involved throughout the discussions/negotiations leading to development of the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA). Please contact the Academic Partnerships Office for further assistance.

Please note:

Partnership agreements must not be entered into or signed by individuals in Colleges/ Departments/ Divisions and can only be signed by the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Senate.

The approval process comprises six distinct stages: project initiation; business case preparation; strategic approval; project development; final proposal; and full approval of agreement.

Stage 1: Project Initiation

The Partnership Sponsor must complete the Initial Proposal form and submit it for discussion to DMB and CMB. CMB will decide whether the proposal should be developed into a full business case. The Initial Proposal form must include as much information as possible about the potential partner, the academic arrangements, the financial arrangements and alignments with College strategies. A template for this purpose has been developed and is available from [here](#).

In many instances a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will exist prior to the initiation of Stage 1. The MoUs entered into by Brunel are normally short documents outlining an intention to explore opportunities for cooperation. The longer MoUs, as pre-contractual documents, should not normally be entered into prior to Stage 1 agreement being granted. **MoUs can only be signed by the Vice-Chancellor or their nominated delegate.** Any existing MoU should be included in the paperwork supporting the proposal.

Stage 2: Business Case Preparation

The Academic Lead is responsible for completing the Business Case proforma which is located [here](#).

Sufficient information gathering at this initial stage ensures that resources are used effectively to develop partnerships that are appropriate and of benefit to Brunel.

The business case will require information on:

A. The Partnership

- The rationale for the proposal, which should address the nature and responsibilities of delivery (including assessments) by both parties;
- The academic structure; student numbers; entry criteria; admission;
- Implications for any accreditation;

- Arrangements for students support (academic/pastoral/language);
- Risk management in case of partnership breakdown;
- Financial arrangements
- Resource implications
- Staffing arrangements
- Minutes of relevant committees where the proposal have been discussed and approved.

B. A desk based information gathering exercise must also be undertaken. This should include gathering as much publicly available information about the potential partner as possible; including for example financial accounts, details of the proposed partner's other partnerships/collaborations, matters that might affect its reputation, links to its website, legal standing and previous quality reviews.

The Business Case and desk based information must be submitted to the Strategic Approval Scrutiny Panel (SASP).

Stage 3: Strategic Approval

The aim of this stage is to ensure that the University has a robust and effective procedure in place to consider whether potential partnerships should be developed further. The resources required to successfully develop and manage partnerships are considerable, making strategic approval an important step in the decision- making process.

SASP will consider whether the proposed activity fits with Brunel's strategic priorities. Establishing and managing partnerships can be costly, and the proposed financial arrangements for the partnership will be explored during this phase, including costs of activities and projected income. In considering the information provided, SASP will determine the level of due diligence to be undertaken, including any requirements for a visit to the partner.

Depending on the type and scale of the proposed partnership, SASP may refer the proposal to the Executive Board for consideration prior to approval. The decision resulting from the scrutiny of this documentation will be communicated to the Partnership Sponsor and Academic Lead.

Once approval is received from SASP, the Project Board that will oversee the completion of the proposal and management of the partnership can be established.

NOTE: Whilst most partnerships can be concluded within months, those requiring new programme developments will take much longer. However, no

more than two years should elapse between Strategic Approval and Full Approval. If this period is exceeded, a new application for Strategic Approval must be made. This helps to ensure that the proposed partnership continues to be strategically relevant.

Stage 4: Project Development

A Project Board will be established to oversee the detailed development of the proposed partnership and ensure its timely completion. The Project Board will be chaired by a Project Manager who will be either the Academic Lead or a person appointed by the Department to fill this role.

The Project Board will be responsible for the following outcomes:

- Detailed programme or module design, including module mapping
- Liaising with PSRBs/accrediting bodies
- Completion of due diligence (including a visit if required)
- Detailed financial arrangements
- Establishing arrangements for partnership management, including oversight of information
- Detailed risk mitigation
- Referring documents for approval to the appropriate committees/persons (e.g. UEC, Director of Finance)
- Finalising the contract Schedules
- The draft agreement/contract

Membership of the Project Board:

- Project Manager (if not the Academic lead)
- Partnership Sponsor
- Vice Dean International/Education
- Head of Department or nominee
- Member of the APO
- Academic Lead
- Representative of CMSR

Due Diligence

The aim of the due diligence process is to look at academic, legal and financial information about the proposed partnership in appropriate depth. This process enables the University to assure itself that both the partner and the University have the capacity to successfully deliver the proposed partnership, and that risks are identified and mitigated. It is important to bear in mind that due diligence is

often a mutual exercise and colleagues should expect to receive requests for similar information from the proposed partner as part of their own due diligence processes.

The specific requirements for information will have been determined by SASP. The resulting documentation will be scrutinised by a specially-convened panel on behalf of the University Education Committee, with input from legal and financial experts as necessary to ensure that the proposed partnership does not pose any unreasonable reputational or financial risk to the University.

Visit to proposed partners

The requirement for a visit to the proposed partner institution will be established by SASP. The purpose and details of any visits will be agreed by the Project Board, when information about particular aspects for follow-up will be available. The visit should be undertaken by a person independent of the proposing College.

Programme delivery arrangements

Programmes delivered in partnership must provide appropriate learning opportunities for all students, and the academic content of any proposed partnership must therefore receive robust scrutiny by members of the University Education Committee. The details of the programme will be included as schedules attached to the partnership agreement.

No programme changes required

Where a proposed partnership does not involve any change to a programme(s) (e.g. articulation agreements), the proposed programme delivery and student support arrangements will be considered by members of the University Education Committee independent of the proposing College.

New or modified programmes:

Approval of the programme content for delivery in partnership may be in respect of:

- approval of a new programme to be delivered in the partnership;
- programme re-approval;
- approval of minor modifications to an existing programme to enable delivery under a partnership.

In these cases the programme and the partnership will be scrutinised via the University's normal process as set out in the [Programme Design, Development and Approval Policy Framework](#), with University Education Committee

/Academic Partnerships Office representation incorporated in the Design Review Panel (see section 11 of the Framework).

Student support arrangements

Evidence must be provided of the student support arrangements put in place by all partners. The degree-awarding body is responsible for the quality of the learning opportunities irrespective of who provides them and it is essential, at this stage, that the University can satisfy itself regarding the quality of support available at a potential partner institution.

Students must receive clear information regarding their rights and responsibilities and the Student Handbook must be maintained to ensure that it remains accurate and reflects required practice. Appropriate contact information must be provided to ensure that support can be provided in a timely and effective manner.

Provision of Information

Communication strategies between the partners should be outlined so as to clearly state the degree-awarding body's responsibility for ensuring that it retains control over the accuracy of the public information, publicity and promotional activity relating to the partnership. In this way, the degree-awarding body will assure itself that this public information is fit for purpose and accessible both to prospective and current students.

Stage 5: Final Proposal and Legal Counsel

At this stage the final draft of the agreement/contract will have been produced by the APO. This draft is presented to Legal Counsel and amended according to any comments received. The outcome of this stage is to ensure the partnership agreement/contract is ready for consideration by the partner and signature by all parties.

Stage 6: Full Approval

The Vice-Chancellor will normally approve partnerships on behalf of Senate. Exceptionally, for complex partnerships such as establishing an embedded college, the partnership agreement will be presented to a meeting of Senate for approval before being presented to the parties for signature. It is customary for the partnership agreement to be sent to the proposed partner for their consideration and signature, before being presented to the Vice-Chancellor for signing on behalf of Senate.

Partnership agreements must not be entered into or signed by individuals in Colleges/ Departments/ Divisions and can only be signed by the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Senate.

Stage	What is this stage about?	How is this stage developed?	Output?
Stage 1	<p>Project Initiation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strategic fit with University and College strategic plans • proposed partner's goals, mission, values • proposed financial arrangements • national and international standing of proposed partner • initial risk assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions within Colleges/Departments/ Divisions • Discussions with College Vice Deans Education and International • Discussions with proposed partner • Completion of Initial Proposal form • Advice from APO 	<p>Agreement by DMB and CMB to continue project development</p>
Stage 2	<p>Business Case Preparation: can the partnership deliver?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance and management arrangements of proposed partner • Legal considerations • Suitability of partners 'resources to deliver on programme • Initial programme delivery and management arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions within Colleges/Departments/ Divisions • Support from College Vice Deans Education and International • Discussions with partner • Collecting information • Completion of forms/templates • Advice from APO 	<p>Completed proposal form with evidence (minutes) that the proposal is supported within the College</p> <p>Approval by DMB and CMB</p>
Stage 3	<p>Strategic Approval</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial arrangements including projected cost and income • Recommendations about requirement for formal due diligence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions with partner • Collecting information • Inter-departmental discussions • Advice from APO 	<p>Approval by SASP, and if necessary by the Executive Board</p>

Stage 4	Project Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic • Completion of due diligence including a visit if required, approved by UEC • Detailed financial arrangements • The draft agreement/contract • Identification of the Account Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice from APO • Discussions with partner • Collecting information • Inter-departmental discussions 	<p>All financial, academic arrangements should be finalised at this stage.</p> <p>Due diligence completion and visit if required</p> <p>Approval by UEC and Director of Finance</p>
Stage 5	Final Proposal and Legal Counsel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of the final draft of the agreement/contract • Amendments and comments from Legal Counsel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-departmental discussions • Advice from APO 	<p>Final draft presented to Legal Counsel by APO and incorporation of all recommendations and comments made in the final draft</p> <p>Approval by Legal Counsel</p>
Stage 6	Full Approval <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration for signature of the final draft by the Vice Chancellor or a designated nominee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice from APO 	<p>Approval by Senate</p>

3. Part C: Managing the delivery of the programme under the Partnership

Programme Management

An academic member of staff at Brunel and the partner institution should be appointed as Academic Leads and will be charged with the operational management of the programme and partnership in compliance with the contractual arrangements as set out in the partnership agreement.

The partnership agreement (or contract) is the focus of a shared understanding of obligations roles and responsibilities. It will give the framework for the delivery and management of the programme, including the financial arrangements for undertaking reviews of the partnership. Any variation to normal Brunel procedures should be detailed in the agreement.

Arrangements for periodic review of the partnership, including how often reviews should take place, should be included in the agreement. Reviews will take place at intervals not normally exceeding five years in order to allow partners to evaluate the on-going suitability of the partnership for all parties. The review should include both the academic and the contractual agreements. Any action plan arising from a review will be monitored annually via the University's Annual Monitoring process, which, for collaborative partnerships, is overseen by the University Education Committee.

Normal University annual monitoring processes and quality assurance mechanisms should be followed for provision delivered in partnership with others. The performance of students provided with learning opportunities in the partnership should be compared with students on the same or similar programmes at Brunel via the University's programme-level [Annual Monitoring process](#) and responses from Departments will then be considered annually at University Education Committee.

In order to ensure appropriate oversight and sharing of good practice, a partnership-specific [Academic Lead Annual Report](#) will also be completed, with a summary of all reports presented to the University Education Committee. The Academic Lead Annual Report will report on the partnership over the course of the academic year and will provide a brief overview of student recruitment, progression and awards, resources and facilities, academic and support issues arising during the year, good practice and recommendations for any actions, as appropriate to the partnership.

Actions for both the University and the partnership might arise from annual monitoring processes and quality assurance mechanisms; those actions are agreed and monitored by the University Education Committee.

Modifications to the Partnership Agreement

Modifications to the partnership agreement may be made by deed of variation and may be the result of annual monitoring or periodic review.

Modifications to the programme content, method of delivery or assessment patterns should be made following the normal University modification procedures but should be made in consultation with partners. Amendments to the agreement will initially be considered by the University Education Committee. Evidence of College consideration and approval will be required in the form of College Management Board and/or Departmental Management Board minutes. Final approval for the modification will be given by Senate.

4. Part D: Terminating Partnerships

Partnership agreements may terminate through the natural completion of the agreed partnership or by either party initiating the termination of partnerships within the terms of the agreement.

If a College/Department/Division seeks termination of a partnership, it must seek advice from the Academic Partnerships Office which will advise on the contractual obligations. A case for termination must be prepared, including evidence of consideration and approval at College level in the form of College Management Board minutes. This will be considered by the Strategic Approval Scrutiny Panel, and a recommendation made to Senate for final approval.

The delivering College/Department/Division should plan for the orderly closing down of the partnership within the contracted period of notice. Any legal, financial or resource aspects must be managed as part of this process. Throughout the termination process, both partners must consider their obligations to offer support to students (or applicants) in order to ensure that they are able to complete their studies within the expected registration period.

Evaluation of this process

The operation of this Code of Practice will be evaluated on an annual basis to ensure it continues to meet the needs of Colleges/Departments/ Divisions and the University; in particular, if the process is appropriately supporting the management of University partnerships, and the alignment to the University strategic plan; if the process is appropriately managing resource issues in relating

to new programme proposals; if there are opportunities to make the process more effective and efficient; and whether the process is appropriately managing risk.

5. Part E: Contact Details of the Academic Partnerships Office

Exchange/ Study Abroad Programmes, Partnerships and Collaborations:

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