



FAQs: Partnerships and Collaborations

Academic Partnerships Office

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Q1: What is a partnership?

A1: A partnership is an arrangement whereby learning opportunities are provided to students in partnership with another party, and which leads to an award of Brunel University London.

Q2: As an academic, where do I start?

A2: Ask yourself first if the collaboration will be sustainable (arrangements may be time consuming), whether it will be supported by your head of Department/Division and by the College, and if it aligns with the University mission, values and strategies (education, internationalisation...)

At this early stage, talk it through with colleagues, including the College Vice Deans International and Education. Don't hesitate to contact the Academic Partnerships Office for a chat. It may be beneficial to prepare a Briefing Note to support your discussion with colleagues. Click [here](#) for the template. Further information on partnerships and exchange programmes is available in the "[Managing Higher Education Provision with Others](#)" section on the University website.

Q3: Where can I get a list of current agreements?

A3: Click [here](#) to have a look at our current agreements. You might find that we already have an arrangement with the university you have in mind.

Q4: A colleague from an overseas university would like to sign an Erasmus+ agreement. Can we sign it?

A4: No. You must first complete an initial proposal form and discuss it with the College Vice Deans International and Education. With their support, you may complete a strategic approval form to obtain internal approval to start a new exchange partnership. Further information on exchange programmes is available in the "[Managing Higher Education Provision with Others](#)" section on the University website

Q5: Can I invite a colleague from a European university to teach at Brunel under the Erasmus+ programme?

A5: Yes, but only if we already have an existing agreement with the host university.

Q6: I have been invited to teach and/or conduct a series of workshops at a university in Europe. Can I receive Erasmus+ funding for the visit?

A6: Yes, but only if we already have an existing agreement with the host university.

Q7: What do we need to take into consideration if we want more student exchange agreements?

A7: Student exchanges are reciprocal. Exchange students pay fees to their home institutions, not to Brunel University London. Many European students want to come to the UK to study and improve their English language skills. This is an issue for Brunel and British universities in general as too few home students have the foreign language skills necessary to live abroad, although some European universities deliver courses in English.

Q8: What is an Articulation arrangement?

A8: 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.

Articulation arrangements require a detailed mapping exercise, close monitoring, periodic review, recruitment channels and often regular visits to the partner.

Q9: How do you make a collaboration as sustainable as possible?

A9: The more reciprocal and balanced a collaboration aims to be, the more sustainable and cost effective it will be for you, your Department, your College and the University. Combining collaborative research and student exchange or articulation arrangement may be a good way of sustaining a partnership.

Q10: Who can help when the partner is a university abroad?

A10: In terms of international collaboration, speak to your College Vice Deans International and Education, then to your academic exchange coordinator (if this is about student exchange).

The International Strategy Manager and International Marketing and Recruitment Managers have also a wealth of expertise and contacts across the world.

Contact the Academic Partnerships Office who will assist you regarding the approval process to ensure your proposal is compliant with the University Regulations.

Q11: What can the Academic Partnerships Office do for me?

A11: The Academic Partnerships Office (APO) supports the Academic Lead and the life-cycle of collaborations and partnerships (approval, compliance). The APO cannot lead and drive the collaboration but it will support you through the partnership development and approval process, the drafting of the agreement, and on-going management.

Q12: Does it really take up to 18 months for a programme to be approved?

A12: Yes, the length of time from the moment the proposal is received by the College Board to the signing of the Agreement may take up to a year and a half.

Gathering the information required to detail the proposed arrangement and discussing your proposal within your Division and College may take time. However, this earlier stage is essential. Your colleagues and the College need to fully understand your proposal in terms of quality, cost and support required from the College and the University. Your proposal will have to fit not only within the College's priorities but also with the University strategy and mission. Due diligence scrutiny of the proposed partner, including academic, financial and legal aspects, is also undertaken. At a later stage in the approval process, the teaching and financial arrangements will be also worked out in detail. Towards the end of the approval process, the input of the Academic Lead will be required during the drafting of the contract or partnership agreement.

Q13: What is an MoU?

A13: An MoU or Memorandum of Understanding is usually a short official document outlining an intention to explore opportunities for cooperation in education and research. Two parties express their willingness to work together in a formal and official manner at an early stage. An MoU is generally not legally binding, and therefore it is not a contractual arrangement. A clause stating that "Nothing in this Memorandum of Understanding shall be construed as creating a legal relationship between the Parties" may confirm this. However, some MoUs might be legally binding; it will say so in their terms.

Q14: Who drafts the partnership agreement?

A14: The partnership agreement will be prepared by the APO with the input of the Academic Lead. The quality assurance and teaching arrangements will be checked by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Quality Assurance and Enhancement). Financial arrangements must be approved by the Finance Office.

Once the final draft is ready, it will be reviewed by the University Secretary who will confirm whether the document is ready to be sent to the partner for review. Once the agreement is finalised and both partners are happy with it, the Vice Chancellor or a designated representative will sign on behalf of the University.

Q15: May I or my Dean sign an MoU, a partnership agreement or a contract?

A15: No, only the Vice-Chancellor or a designated representative may sign partnership agreements and MoUs.

Q16: Can Brunel and/or the Partner advertise or promote the proposed programme before the contract has been signed “subject to validation” or “subject to final agreement”?

A16: The answer is No.