

An overview of Collaborative Partner and Programme Approval

About the Collaborative Partnerships and Programme Approval Process (Academic Partnerships)

The Revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education (QAA) outlines that HE providers, as the degree-awarding body, have 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 that the Expectations outlined in the revised Quality Code are met and that the Core Practices can be demonstrated as part of assuring their standards and quality.

Partnership is as "An arrangement between two or more organisations to deliver aspects of teaching, learning, assessment and student support. It refers to collaborative arrangements involving students and/or awards which include those involving guaranteed progression and sharing of services. Partnership arrangements may apply to the delivery of whole courses of study or to elements of courses, individual modules, or self-contained components of study."

At DMU there are fifteen models of collaborative activity categorised into three elements according to activity type and risk: 1. Academic Partnerships, 2. Recruitment Partnerships and 3. Student Mobility Partnerships. The Department of Academic Quality (DAQ) guidance and this overview cover **Academic Partnerships** and **Enhanced Progression Agreements (EPAs)**.

Type of Approval Event | Preparations

Types and documentation

The proposal determines the type of approval event. There are three types, which can be combined in a single event or held separately:

Partner Approval	Programme Validation	Delivery Approval
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Each type is accompanied by different documentation that the partner/faculty submits 4 weeks before the event. The documentation will be reviewed by the Approval Panel, composed by DMU and comprising independent internal and external colleagues and a student representative, to form a judgement on the effectiveness of the partner/programme arrangements.

Pre-event meeting

This meeting will be held two weeks before the event's date and will include discussion of the documentation submitted by the partner and the faculty.

The Approval Panel will meet with colleagues from the faculty and professional services only, to discuss the proposal and any issues arising from the documentation. Lines of enquiry or queries identified at the meeting will be communicated to the partner by the Servicing Officer.

First steps

Enquiries/ Discussions: After initial enquiries, a period of informal contact normally follows in order for mutual confidence to grow between the prospective partner and the University. Initial discussions provide the opportunity for the University to outline its approach to managing collaborative partnerships so that the prospective partner has a good understanding of what is expected.

Due Diligence: In order to safeguard the interests of students, the University will undertake appropriate due diligence before proceeding in any substantive way with a collaborative partnership. The Global Partnerships Unit (GPU) and Educational Partnerships (EP) – for UK partners - manage the initial and full level Due Diligence and also undertake a costings exercise for the proposed provision.

The Due Diligence process addresses legal, financial, reputational and strategic-fit prerequisites.

Executive Board submission: Once all stages of due diligence are complete, EP/ GPU prepare a summary submission to the University's Executive Board (EB) for consideration to grant 'approval in principle' and endorse the timescale for the approval event.

It is important for the faculty and the partner to ensure that the partnership and proposed programmes for delivery are not advertised until approval in principle has been granted by Executive Board.

EP/ GPU will notify the prospective partner and the faculty of the EB's decision and, if approval in principle is granted, indicate that the proposal may be advertised "subject to approval" or "subject to validation".

The Approval Event

The Meetings

The event's discussions will be based on the lines of enquiry already communicated to the partner. The itinerary will depend on the type of event.

At a minimum the Approval Panel will meet with senior management, teaching and professional services staff at the partner institution as well as students and will have a tour of the facilities. All meetings - except the one with the students - should include the DMU Link Tutor or main faculty lead whose role will be to support the partner.

Outcomes

At the end of the approval event the Panel will provide feedback to the partner on the outcome of the event's deliberations and any actions the partner and faculty need to take before the teaching can start:

- ❖ **Conditions** – mandatory requirements that must be satisfactorily addressed by a certain deadline before teaching/ delivery can commence
- ❖ **Recommendations** – not mandatory but points for the partner and/ or faculty to consider
- ❖ **Required Technical Corrections (RTCs)** – minor issues to resolve before the programme start
- ❖ **Observations/ Good practice/ Commendations** – comments for noting by the University

Full Report | Six Month Follow Up/ Review

- A full report will follow the formal Outcomes report.
- There will be a six month review from the date of the event to monitor progress on the actions listed in the report.
- The Panel's conclusion will be submitted to the University Collaborative Provision Committee (UCPC).
- The Partner Institution Collaborative Agreement (the contract) should be signed prior to teaching commencing.

Find out more

Full DMU guidance

Section 1 in the [Guide to Managing Collaborative Provision](#)

<http://www.dmu.ac.uk/documents/about-dmu-documents/quality-management-and-policy/academic-quality/collaborative-provision/collaborative-provision-guide.pdf>

Quick guides:

- **Diagram 1:** [The Process for approving new partnership proposals](#)
- **Diagram 2:** The development and validation of new programmes, alongside the partner approval process (p.22 in the Guide)

DMU proformas for Approval events

DAQ webpage guidance and forms – "Collaborative provision / Approval"

<http://www.dmu.ac.uk/about-dmu/quality-management-and-policy/academic-quality/support-contacts-resources/guidance-forms-homepage.aspx>

External sources

QAA The Revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education - Advice and Guidance Partnerships

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/partnerships>