# Framework for the Management of Taught Collaborative Provision

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1. Introduction to Collaborative Provision

The University supports a wide range of learning and teaching collaborations which provide new opportunities for students and benefit academic departments.

This Framework sets out the University’s policy and procedures for the approval and management of collaborative taught provision and serves as a “how to” guide.

Collaborative taught provision is defined by the University as provision (programmes or units):

- which are delivered and/or supported and/or assessed through an arrangement with another organisation
- which lead to the University granting credits or an award
- where achievement of the learning outcomes is dependent on the contribution of the other organisation.

The following partnership activities are outside the scope of this Framework:

- Student exchanges, placements and apprenticeships, for which there are other policies in place
- Arrangements where only teaching space is provided by another organisation (and which could be substituted with minimal disruption if necessary)
- Recruitment/progression arrangements for entry to the start of a University programme where students take the whole Sheffield programme, eg 1+1 (or similar) Masters recruitment arrangements (managed by Global Engagement)
- Embedded College (information on USIC available here https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/lets/pp/policy/usic)

This Framework aligns with the Quality Assurance Agency’s Quality Code on Managing Higher Education Provision with Others, Qualifications Involving More Than One Degree-Awarding Body Characteristics Statement and takes into account other relevant guidance in the sector.

2. Types of Collaborative Arrangement

Dual (or Multiple) Degree Programme

A programme delivered jointly with one or more other universities which leads to dual or multiple degrees. Each of the partner universities is responsible for its own award on completion of its own distinct criteria.

Key features:

- Undergraduate or postgraduate level.
- May involve more than one partner university
- Students usually register with and study at both/all universities.
- One university may take on a co-ordinating role.

Double (or Multiple) Degree Programme

A programme delivered jointly with one or more universities which leads to an award by each of the partner universities on completion of a shared set of criteria.

Key features:

- Postgraduate level only
- Usually undertaken with one partner university, but normally no more than three awarding universities in total
• Requires a high level of co-operation between the partner universities as the programme must be jointly designed, delivered and assessed.
• Students usually register with and study at both/all universities.
• One university may take on a co-ordinating role.
• Similar to a Joint Degree Programme, but with separate awards by each of the partner universities.

Joint Degree Programme

A programme delivered jointly with one or two other universities which leads to a joint award (in the form of a single certificate) awarded by the partner universities on completion of a shared set of criteria.

Key features:
• Postgraduate level only
• Usually undertaken with one partner university, but no more than three awarding universities in total
• Requires a high level of co-operation between the partner universities as the programme must be jointly designed, delivered and assessed.
• Students usually register with and study at both/all universities.
• One university may take on a co-ordinating role
• Similar to a Double (or Multiple) Degree Programme, but with a joint award rather than separate awards by each university.

Articulation

An arrangement allowing students who undertake a specified programme at a partner organisation to be admitted with advanced standing to a subsequent stage of a University of Sheffield programme.

Key features:
• Often take the form of “2+2” arrangements, where a two-year programme at a partner organisation is taken before admission to the start of year 2 (FHEQ Level 5) of a Sheffield undergraduate degree
• Students normally have a contractual relationship with the partner organisation for their programme and subsequently with the University of Sheffield
• The partner organisation’s programme is mapped for equivalence with the part of the University of Sheffield programme which it replaces
• The University of Sheffield specifies the requirements for admission to its programme, which normally consist of grades to be achieved in the partner organisation’s programme of study and English language requirements

Off-Campus/Flying Faculty with Partner Organisation

A University of Sheffield programme delivered at another location with premises/facilities provided by a partner organisation.

Key features:
• All teaching delivery and assessment undertaken by University of Sheffield (or International Faculty staff)
• Delivered at another location (ie not at the University of Sheffield nor at the International Faculty’s City College Campus in Thessaloniki)
• A partner organization provides teaching premises and/or services or facilities which are essential for achievement of the learning outcomes, eg specialist IT facilities, library
Collaborative Models Not Supported by the University

The following types of collaboration are not supported unless a strong strategic imperative can be demonstrated. In addition to the usual approvals, University Executive Board approval will be needed.

Franchise/Teaching Services

An arrangement in which the University authorises another organization to deliver part or all of one of the University’s own programmes leading to a Sheffield award.

Validation

An arrangement where the University agrees to make an award for a programme designed and delivered by another organisation.

3. Issues to Consider and Key Professional Services Contacts

In developing teaching partnerships with other organisations, Departments need to consider a number of key issues with support from professional services. In the first instance, please contact your Faculty’s Quality Management Adviser in Learning and Teaching Services who will put you in touch with the Quality Manager (Partnerships) and Global Engagement (in the case of an international collaboration) to discuss and take forward, as appropriate. Depending on the type of collaboration, areas for consideration include some or all of the following:

- Strategic fit: how does the proposed collaboration contribute to the University’s Internationalisation Strategy [link], L&T Strategy [link] and relevant Faculty plans
- The collaborative model, including the programme/award(s) and which organisation will be responsible for delivering/awarding credits for which parts of the programme, ensuring adherence to University regulations on credit recognition
- Business case: market, fees, financial arrangements, tax, resources, costs, sustainability
- Suitability of the proposed partner organisation/location
- Operational/academic arrangements with partner organisation(s): recruitment, immigration/visa support, admissions, registration, student support, student engagement, student representation, assessment, exam boards, transcripts and certificates, graduation ceremonies, handling of appeals and complaints
- Appointment of external examiners and associated arrangements, ensuring adherence to the University’s Code of Practice on External Examining
- Governance/management arrangements with partner organisation including responsibilities for programme quality management
- The overall quality and coherence of the collaborative degree programme
- The student experience and student support
- Student engagement and student representation arrangements
- Student evaluation, ensuring that the requirements of the University’s Policy on Student Evaluation of Programmes of Study are met
- Curriculum intellectual property rights and students’ IP rights
- Access to study facilities and services including library, IT, careers, student welfare, students' union or similar
- Staffing arrangements and any staff development needs related to the programme
- Health and safety
- Any risks associated with any aspect of the collaborative programme, partnership, location or arrangements. These should be captured in a risk assessment (see Section 5).

### Key Professional Services Contacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Support with:  
- identifying the most appropriate model of collaboration  
- academic programme development  
- academic-related arrangements with the partner organisation (with other prof services as required)  
- academic approval  
- annual monitoring process  
- drawing up the academic agreement with the partner organisation (in most cases)  
- agreement renewal | Quality Management Team in Learning and Teaching Services  
Key contact:  
Karen Anderson  
Quality Manager (Partnerships)  
Learning and Teaching Services  
k.h.anderson@sheffield.ac.uk |
| For international collaborations: advice on strategic fit and choice of partner organisation(s) | Partnerships and Global Opportunities, Global Engagement  
https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/internationalpartnerships |
| Advice/support on recruitment/market research | Relevant Faculty support officer  
Recruitment Support Team  
https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssd/student-recruit/recsupteam |
| Business Planning | Relevant Faculty support officer  
Planning and Governance Services  
http://www.shef.ac.uk/pgs/contact |
| HR related staff issues (working abroad) | Relevant Faculty HR Manager  
https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/hr/aboutus/whoweare/hrservices |
| Travel insurance for staff teaching overseas | Insurance team  
https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/finance/staff-information/help/insurance/index |
| Financial arrangements with partner organisation, tax advice in relation to programmes delivered overseas and student fees | Relevant Faculty Finance Team  
http://www.shef.ac.uk/finance/our_staff/faculty/faculty |
|  | Tax team  
https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/finance/staff-information/help/tax/index |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Fees Team, Student Administration</td>
<td><a href="mailto:studentfees@sheffield.ac.uk">studentfees@sheffield.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admissions arrangements with partner</td>
<td>Admissions Service Team 5-Alternative Routes and Programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>organisation(s)</td>
<td><a href="https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssd/admissions/contact">https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssd/admissions/contact</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visa compliance requirements</td>
<td>International Student Support Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-academic student support and experience</td>
<td><a href="https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/contacts/iss">https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/contacts/iss</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrangements for student registration</td>
<td>Registry Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>processes and tuition fee payments, student</td>
<td><a href="http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssd/reg">http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssd/reg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>records</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library provision</td>
<td>Faculty Engagement and Partnerships Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/library/libstaff/libstafflist">https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/library/libstaff/libstafflist</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A number of other professional services departments may need to be involved. Learning and Teaching Services will be able to advise on the appropriate contacts.

4. **Key Principles and Requirements**

Whatever the nature of the collaboration, the University is responsible for the quality and standards of all provision leading to an award or credits made in its name, wherever the delivery takes place.

Collaborative programmes should:

- be consistent with University, Faculty and Department strategies
- contribute positively to the University’s national and international standing
- be with institutions that can demonstrate good standing and shared values
- be in accordance with the QAA Quality Code and relevant external accreditation requirements
- be in accordance with the University’s legal and regulatory capacity and requirements
- apply standards that are equivalent to and consistent with those for programmes delivered entirely at/by the University
- deliver comparable quality of the student learning experience with equivalent student support arrangements
- demonstrate financial viability and sustainability
- ensure there is a good case for any case of double counting of credits towards a University of Sheffield degree: see policy on double counting [https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.489780!/file/Policy_on_Double_Counting_.pdf](https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.489780!/file/Policy_on_Double_Counting_.pdf)
- be delivered and assessed in the English language unless there are specific reasons to justify this not being the case (which will require additional consideration and approval)
- facilitate progression routes to study at the University
- enhance curricula and the student learning experience through internationalisation and partnership working
- ensure clarity for all parties in relation to student registration and the ownership of/responsibility for credits and awards

Also:

- Credit may not be awarded jointly. Other institutions may contribute credits to the award within the limits set out in University regulations but there must be a single institution that
owns and awards the credits for each unit

- A risk assessment must be drawn up and maintained by the academic department (see Section 6)
- A legally-binding agreement should be in place for all collaborative programmes, setting out the responsibilities and arrangements between the parties (see Section 7).

5. Development and Approval of New Collaborative Programmes

The process for development and approval of new collaborative programmes is similar in many respects to that of non-collaborative programmes, but with a number of additional elements covering the collaborative arrangements with the partner organisation. The key aspects of the development and approval process are set out in the diagram below. Professional services, including Learning and Teaching Services and Global Engagement for international programmes) can provide advice and support.

Support for the development of new collaborative programmes is provided by professional services contacts as set out in Section 3.

The New Programmes Form (including the section on Collaborative Programmes) can be found here.

The following approvals are required for a new Collaborative Programme:

- Business Case Approval by Faculty
- Academic Approval by the Faculty (reporting to the Learning and Teaching Committee and Senate)
- Approval of the Collaborative Model/Arrangements by the Committee for Collaborative Provision (reporting to the Learning and Teaching Committee and Senate)

See development and approval flowchart diagram below.
Initial Planning for a New Collaborative Programme
Advice to academic department on developing collaborative programme and issues to consider provided by LeTS, Global Engagement and a range of professional services departments in relation to the strategic fit, viability of the proposal, partner institution(s), type of collaboration, partnership arrangements and the approval process
Completion of Part A of *New Programmes Form*.

Faculty approval in principle (business case)
by FPVC/FDO/FEB following consultation with professional services

Discussions with partner organisation
Development of academic programme
Work on Part B of *New Programmes Form* and related documentation
Start to draft agreement

Committee for Collaborative Provision approval of collaborative model and partner institution (including due diligence and risk assessment)

Full Academic Approval by Faculty

Programmes set up and programme arrangements put into place in liaison with professional services (supported by LeTS)

Finalise draft agreement in liaison with partner institution (facilitated by LeTS)

Final University approval by Learning and Teaching Committee and Senate

Approval and signature of collaborative agreement by the University and partner institution (facilitated by LeTS)
6. Risk Management and Due Diligence

A risk assessment will be required for all proposed new collaborative programmes. This will as part of the approval process by the Committee for Collaborative Provision and the Faculty. The University’s guidance and template is used for this purpose. Learning and Teaching Services will be able to provide you with information on the most common risks to address in the risk assessment.

In order to help ensure that any risks to the quality of the provision and student experience associated with collaborations are identified, considered and managed, due diligence enquiries are undertaken in respect of proposed new partner organisations. These enquiries are carried out by the relevant professional services including Learning and Teaching Services and Global Engagement. Depending on the type of collaboration, a visit to the proposed partner institution by staff representing the Committee for Collaborative Provision may be required as a part of due diligence activity. Risk assessments are reviewed and updated each year during annual monitoring.

7. Agreements for Collaborative Programmes

An agreement should be in place with the partner organisation(s) before the start of a new programme. Support for the drafting of agreements is provided by Learning and Teaching Services, who hold agreement templates for the main models of collaboration. An academic department may be asked to cover the cost of any external legal advice which is required.

Agreements for collaborative taught programmes must be signed by the Authorised Financial Officer or delegated authority. Prior to signature, the agreements must have been approved by the Vice-President for Education.

Areas covered by the agreement usually include:

- Period of agreement and number of student intakes
- Obligations of the University of Sheffield and the partner organisation
- Quality and academic standards
- Programme information
- Programme recruitment, admissions, delivery and assessment responsibilities and arrangements
- Programme management responsibilities and arrangements
- Student engagement, representation and evaluation arrangements
- Student support, student discipline, complaints and appeals arrangements
- Learning facilities, resources, teaching accommodation
- Details of awards, transcripts and graduation arrangements
- Intellectual property rights
- Student status
- Student numbers
- Programme and contract review arrangements
- Financial arrangement
- Insurance
- Liability
- Termination arrangements
- Consequences of termination
- Dispute resolution procedures
- Governing law and jurisdiction
- Compliance with legislation including the Bribery Act, Data Protection Act and Freedom of
Memorandum of Understanding
In advance of a binding agreement, a Memorandum of Understanding, expressing a general convergence of good will between the parties and indicating a common line of action, may be drawn up, with support from Global Engagement for international collaborations.

Renewal of agreements
Prior to the renewal of an agreement, the business case, collaborative arrangements and programme should be reviewed and approved. Learning and Teaching Services will be able to provide support with this process.

Termination of agreements
On rare occasions, an agreement may be terminated early. In such cases, the parties should ensure that students on the programme(s) are not disadvantaged and that suitable winding down arrangements are agreed.
8. **University, Faculty and Departmental Responsibilities**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Work</th>
<th>University Oversight</th>
<th>Faculty Responsibility</th>
<th>Departmental Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approval of new collaborative programmes and</td>
<td>Committee for Collaborative Provision (CCP) reporting to the Learning and Teaching Committee:</td>
<td>Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee (FLTO):</td>
<td>Departmental Learning and Teaching Committee:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension of existing agreements</td>
<td>• Policies • Approval of permitted types of collaboration • Approval of proposed new collaborative arrangements and extensions (in liaison with Faculty)</td>
<td>• Approval of business case for proposed new arrangements/extensions following professional services consultation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Academic approval of programme of study and arrangements related to the student experience for new arrangements and extensions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Considering outcomes of Annual Monitoring as part of Annual Reflection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ongoing management of collaborative programme(s)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Academic Lead:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Liaison with partner organisation(s)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Arrangements associated with the programme (In liaison with professional services, as appropriate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area of Work</td>
<td>University Oversight</td>
<td>Faculty Responsibility</td>
<td>Departmental Responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual Monitoring of Collaborative</td>
<td>Receives overall summary and reports on issues to LTC Collaborative Programmes and</td>
<td>FLTC ensures that Annual Monitoring is considered as part of Annual Reflection</td>
<td>Ongoing programme management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programmes</td>
<td>reports on this to Leaning and Teaching Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td>Annual review/monitoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>See also Role of Collaborative Programme Director/Academic Lead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periodic review</td>
<td>Reported through central committees (QSC/LTC)</td>
<td>Input into and follow up from Periodic Review</td>
<td>Including collaborative programme(s) in the Periodic Review of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Department’s provision and taking any relevant follow-up action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative agreement</td>
<td>Final academic approval by Vice-President for Education</td>
<td>Faculty Finance Manager/FDO checks draft agreement before it proceeds to signature</td>
<td>Head of Department (or nominee) and Academic Lead check the draft agreement before it proceeds to signature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Signed by Head of Finance (or delegated authority)</td>
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9. **Role of the Academic Lead of a Collaborative Programme**

The Academic Lead (or Programme Leader) of the collaborative programme appointed by the Head of Department will be the University’s key contact regarding the collaborative programme and will also be the first point of contact for the partner organisation. Academic Leads play an important role in managing the quality of the collaborative programme and communicating with the Department, Faculty and other parts of the University on issues relating to the collaborative programme.

Key responsibilities of the Academic Lead of **jointly-delivered programmes** are as follows:

- Liaison with the key academic contact and other relevant staff at the partner organisation, visiting annually or having alternative arrangements in place depending on the nature of the programme and partner organisation
- Leading on programme management and delivery, ensuring that arrangements are in accordance with the agreement
- Overseeing the assessment arrangements between the partner organisations
- Ensuring that the external examiner arrangements meet the requirements of the University’s [Code of Practice](#) on External Examining and briefing the external examiner on the programme
- Leading on quality management of the programme.
- Ensuring that joint programme committee meetings or similar are held as per the agreement
- Ensuring the continued suitability facilities and learning resources at the partner institution, raising any potential issues with the partner organisation and/or Learning and Teaching Services, as required
- Complete an Annual Monitoring on the collaborative programme and update the Risk Register annually. This will feed into the Department’s Annual Reflection and into overall University Annual Monitoring of Collaborative Programmes by the Committee for Collaborative Provision.
- Ensuring that the admissions and L&T related arrangements in the agreement are adhered to
- For Joint Award and Double Degree programmes only: ensure that the joint programme regulations for the award are operating appropriately and bring any required changes to the attention of the relevant professional services.

Key responsibilities of the Academic Lead of **articulation arrangements** are as follows:

- Liaison with the key academic contact and other relevant staff at the partner organisation, visiting annually or having alternative regular means of communication in place to ensure the continued suitability and equivalence of the partner organisation’s programme
- In the case of any changes to the partner organisation’s programme, considering the potential implications on equivalence and preparation for study at the University of Sheffield and dealing with this as appropriate
- Student transition arrangements, including admission to the University of Sheffield and induction
- Monitoring the performance of articulation students
- Ensuring that the admissions and L&T related arrangements in the agreement are adhered to
10. **Review of Collaborative Programmes**

The annual monitoring of collaborative programmes is a key part of the University’s processes for the assurance of standards and quality and risk management of its collaborative provision.

Annual monitoring Google survey forms are provided each year (usually in early Summer) to Academic Leads for completion.

The completed forms contribute to Departmental/Faculty Annual Reflection and feed into an overall University summary of collaborative provision provided to the Committee for Collaborative Provision to help inform the development and quality management of collaborative provision.

The University conducts five yearly Periodic Reviews of the taught provision of academic departments. Collaborative programmes will normally be considered within these Reviews. A separate Review may be needed in some cases, depending on the nature of the collaboration. As indicated above (in Section 6), prior to the extension of agreements, collaborative programmes should be reviewed.

11. **Providing Information for Students**

Programme Directors/Link Academics are responsible for ensuring that students have clear information on the collaborative programme. This may be provided in the form of a student handbook or on the Department’s website, a Google site or MOLE, as considered most appropriate by the Department and Academic Lead.

In addition to the "usual" information requirements for all students which are set out [here](#), Academic Leads of collaborative programmes need to ensure that students are also provided with the following information on the arrangements with the partner organisation:

**Student Information on Jointly-delivered programmes:**
- Information on student registration with the University and partner organisation
- Services and facilities provided by each institution, including student support
- Programme information, including programme specification, programme regulations, unit outlines, assessment arrangements
- Key contacts at each institution
- Complaints and appeals procedures for the collaboration
- Transition arrangements
- Student engagement and representation arrangements
- Graduation arrangements

**Student Information on Articulation Arrangements:**
- Transition arrangements and induction to the University of Sheffield
- Key contacts for any queries/comments with regards to the articulation arrangement

The above lists are not exhaustive and the information needed by students will vary depending on the particular type of arrangement and programme. The Academic Lead should liaise with the partner organization, professional services contacts and the programme team in order to assemble the appropriate information.