

**University of Suffolk**

**PROCEDURES FOR THE APPROVAL,  
MONITORING AND REVIEW OF  
PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITY**

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**1. Introduction**

course under the usual admission criteria, after successful completion of an agreed programme of study at a partner institution.

- **Articulation arrangements:** where the University guarantees students entry to an advanced stage of a University of Suffolk course as a result of successfully completing an agreed programme of study at a partner institution.
- **Delivery of University of Suffolk module(s) at a partner institution:** where the University agrees to deliver module(s) at a partner institution, leading to the award of University of Suffolk credit.
- **Delivery of a University of Suffolk course under a flying faculty model in partnership with others:** where the University delivers one of its own courses off-campus (usually overseas) in collaboration with a partner institution, with delivery and assessment being undertaken by University staff.
- **Co-delivery of a course in partnership with a professional organisation:** where the University delivers a course in collaboration with a professional organisation (for example involving co-teaching and/or use of the partner's facilities and resources).
- **Validation arrangements:** where the University judges that a programme (or part thereof) developed and delivered by another institution is of an appropriate quality and academic standard to lead to a University of Suffolk award.
- **Franchise arrangements:** whereby the University allows the whole or part of one or more of its own internally developed courses to be delivered and assessed at a partner institution, leading to a University of Suffolk award.
- **Dual or multiple awards:** where the University and one or more other awarding institution(s) together provide a course leading to separate awards of both, or all, of the institutions (with awards made on successful completion of all elements of the collaborative course<sup>1</sup>).
- **Joint awards:** where the University and one or more other awarding institution(s) together provide a course leading to a joint award of both, or all, institutions.
- **Exchange arrangements and study abroad:** including student exchanges and student mobility programmes such as the Turing Scheme.

1.7 If a potential partnership does not fall into one of the above categories, please contact the Centre for Academic and International Partnerships (CAIP) ([partnerships@uos.ac.uk](mailto:partnerships@uos.ac.uk)) in the first instance for further advice and guidance.

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<sup>1</sup> These are referred to as double or multiple degrees (co-dependent, mutually contingent qualifications) in the QAA's [Characteristics statement for qualifications involving more than one degree-awarding body](#) (October 2015).



## 2. Due diligence

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- 2.1 Partnership activity can present a higher level of risk, particularly in the international arena, and it is therefore vital that appropriate due diligence activity is undertaken before the University embarks on a relationship with any partner organisation, regardless of the proposed type of arrangement. While the level of due diligence will vary according to the nature of the risks involved, due diligence should normally include consideration of the following:
- a) the size and status of the proposed partner institution, and compatibility in terms of mission and educational objectives
  - b) the legal, financial and academic standing of the institution (including standing in national and international league tables and legal capacity to enter into an agreement with the University of Suffolk)
  - c) whether the prospective partner is known to have current or previous relationships with other UK awarding bodies (if so, enquiries should be made of that institution as to the standing of the prospective partner and their experiences of partnership working)
  - d) whether the prospective partner is known to have any business and/or ethical interests or links that might pose a reputational risk to the University
  - e) whether the proposed arrangement conflicts with any existing partnership arrangements within the University
  - f) for international partnerships, the stability of the region where the institution is based and any aspects of the legal, political, financial or cultural environment that may impact on the proposed partnership (information can be obtained from relevant national government offices and agencies and UK bodies with a presence in the country, including the British Council, UK NARIC and UK government offices)
  - g) the language of delivery and assessment at the proposed partner institution
  - h) for arrangements involving collaboration in terms of course delivery, whether the proposed partner institution has experience of successful delivery of comparable courses at a similar level, or has demonstrable capacity to deliver courses at that level
  - i) the proposed partner institution's understanding of the UK higher education sector (including the culture and ethos of UK higher education) and its capacity to meet associated quality assurance and enhancement assessment

- 2.2 More information on required due diligence activity for each type of partnership arrangement is provided in subsequent sections of this handbook. The Director of Finance and Planning should be consulted on any financial due diligence activity.
- 2.3 The [advice and guidance on partnerships](#) within the UK Quality Code is a useful

**3. Financial costings**

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## 4. Entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

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- 4.1 A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is designed to enable the University and another institution to agree to promote cooperation, discussions and positive academic relations to their mutual benefit, without establishing a binding relationship between them. Under such arrangements, opportunities may be sought for the exchange of students and academic staff or other activities agreed to be mutually beneficial.
- 4.2 The MoU represents a statement of intent rather than an agreement establishing a formal relationship between the two institutions. This type of arrangement might be a precursor to the negotiation of a more detailed partnership arrangement.

### Due diligence activity and approval of the proposed link

- 4.3 In order to seek approval for a MoU, the [MoU proposal form](#) (available on the University website) should be completed and submitted to the Portfolio Oversight Committee for approval.
- 4.4 The form should summarise due diligence activity outcomes (with supporting evidence), in order to demonstrate the following:
- a) that the proposed institution is a suitable partner for the University (for example in terms of reputation, academic standing, mission and educational objectives)
  - b) that there is a good strategic case to support the development of the proposed new partnership in line with institutional and/or school objectives
  - c) that the proposed arrangement has academic credibility
  - d) that the proposed arrangement does not conflict with any existing partnership arrangements
  - e) that the proposed arrangement does not present undue risks to the University
  - f) that the arrangement is fully supported by senior staff from both the University and the proposed partner institution.

### Approval of the MoU

- 4.5 Once the proposal form has been approved by the Portfolio Oversight Committee, negotiations with the partner institution concerning the MoU can be completed.
- 4.6 The MoU should be drafted by the Centre for Academic and International Partnerships in consultation with relevant academic schools and professional services departments. The final draft of the MoU should be submitted for approval and signature by the Vice-Chancellor or other authorised signatory. It should then be forwarded to the partner institution for signature.

- 4.7 The original signed copy of the MoU will be maintained within a central University repository. The partnership link will be added to the Partnerships Register, which is provided at least annually to Senate for information.

*Ongoing monitoring of MoUs*

- 4.8 A member of University

## 5. Progression arrangements with no recognition of credit

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- 5.1 Under a progression agreement, the University of Suffolk guarantees students at the partner institution consideration for admission to the first year of a University of Suffolk course after successful completion of an agreed programme of study at the partner institution. This is normally subject to standard admissions criteria for the relevant course, although the criteria may be adapted, for example to meet widening participation objectives as part of Access and Participation planning. The University does not recognise credit from the partner institution, and students enter the University at the same point as standard applicants.
- 5.2 Students wishing to be admitted through a progression arrangement will have to apply individually for transfer to the University and progression may be subject to an individual admissions hurdle, for example individual application, interview or examination of a student's performance on their current programme. The relevant academic school within the University retains the right to refuse admission.
- 5.3 Students admitted under progression arrangements will be required to meet standard English language entry requirements, as outlined on the University of Suffolk website.

### Due diligence activity and approval of the proposed link

- 5.4 In order to seek approval for a progression arrangement with no recognition of credit, the [progression agreement proposal form](#) (available on the University website) should be completed and signed by relevant parties.
- 5.5 The form should summarise due diligence activity outcomes (with supporting evidence), in order to demonstrate the following:
- a) that there is a good strategic case to support the development of the proposed new partnership in line with institutional and/or school objectives
  - b) that the proposed institution from which students will progress is of an appropriate academic standing
  - c) that the programme of study at the proposed partner institution prepares students well for progression to the relevant University of Suffolk course, enabling them to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes commensurate with relevant academic and non-academic entry requirements
  - d) that the proposed arrangement does not present undue risks to the University
  - e) that appropriate arrangements are in place to manage, oversee and support the progression arrangement (including the provision of guidance and support to progressing students)
  - f) that appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure the accuracy of all published information associated with the progression arrangement.

### Approval of the progression agreement

- 5.6 Once the proposal form has been approved by the relevant parties, negotiations with the partner institution concerning the progression agreement can be completed.
- 5.7 The agreement should be drafted by External Relations and/or the Centre for Academic and International Partnerships in consultation with relevant academic schools and professional services departments. The final draft of the agreement should be submitted for approval and signature by the Vice-Chancellor or other authorised signatory. It should then be submitted to the partner institution for signature.
- 5.8 The original signed copy of the agreement will be maintained within a central University repository. The partnership link will be added to the Partnerships Register, which is provided at least annually to Senate for information.

### Ongoing monitoring of the progression agreement

- 5.9 A member of University staff should be nominated to oversee the implementation of the progression agreement, with responsibility for maintaining regular contact with the partner institution, approving relevant publicity material (in liaison with External Relations) and providing support and guidance to progressing students.
- 5.10 The nominated contact should also be responsible for reviewing the arrangement on an annual basis (including monitoring the progress of students entering 5.32 841.n]TJETQ EMC /Span A



## **6. Progression arrangements with recognition of credit**

- d) for international links, that the programme of study at the proposed partner institution enables students to develop appropriate English language skills in alignment with standard University English language entry requirements
  - e) that the proposed arrangement does not present undue risks to the University
  - f) that appropriate arrangements are in place to manage, oversee and support the progression arrangement
  - g) that appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure the accuracy of all published information associated with the progression arrangement.
- 6.7 The supporting evidence should include full details of the programme of study at the proposed partner institution from which students will be progressing; information on the course to which they will be progressing at the University of Suffolk; and evidence of mapping of relevant learning outcomes for the recognition of prior learning.
- 6.8 If programme delivery and assessment at the partner institution is in a language other than English, an independent translator needs to be appointed to support the approval process. The translator should be on the British Council and/or Institute of Linguistics register of translators.

#### Approval of the progression agreement

- 6.9 Once the proposal form has been approved by the Quality Committee, negotiations with the partner institution concerning the progression agreement can be completed.
- 6.10 The agreement should be drafted by the Centre for Academic and International Partnerships in consultation with relevant academic schools and professional services departments. The final draft of the agreement should be submitted for approval and signature by the Vice-Chancellor or other authorised signatory. The agreement should then be forwarded to the partner institution for signature.
- 6.11 The original signed copy of the agreement will be maintained within a central University repository. The partnership link will be added to the Partnerships Register, which is provided at least annually to Senate for information.

#### Ongoing monitoring of progression agreements

- 6.12 A member of University staff should be nominated to oversee the implementation of the progression agreement, with responsibility for maintaining regular contact with the partner institution, approving relevant publicity material (in liaison with External Relations) and providing support and guidance to progressing students.

partner institution, and ensuring that any curriculum changes made by either institution do not have a negative impact on the continuing alignment of provision.





Chancellor or other authorised signatory. The agreement should then be forwarded to the partner institution for signature.

7.12 The original signed copy of the agreement

formally withdraw from the Articulation Agreement and the Partnerships Register should be updated accordingly.

## 8. Delivery of University of Suffolk module(s) at a partner institution

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- 8.1 Where an academic school within the University wishes to allow delivery of individual modules at another institution, leading to the award of University of Suffolk credit, the approval of the Quality Committee is required.
- 8.2 In such situations, the students to whom the module(s) are being delivered remain registered students of the partner institution, but the University of Suffolk retains responsibility for ensuring the quality and academic standard of the learning and assessment opportunities provided. The University will need to retain basic student records in order to record student achievement and issue transcripts, and where appropriate to provide access to relevant University resources and support services.
- 8.3 In all instances delivery should be undertaken by members of University of Suffolk staff, and the language of delivery and assessment must be English. While the mode of delivery may differ, students should be expected to complete the same assessments (in accordance with the same assessment criteria and subject to the same assessment regulations, policies and procedures) as students completing the module(s) at the University of Suffolk.
- 8.4 Marking should be subject to internal and external moderation in accordance with the University of Suffolk Assessment Moderation Policy, and marks should be ratified by the relevant University of Suffolk Assessment Board in accordance with standard University practice.

### Approval of the proposed link

- 8.5 In order to seek approval for the delivery of module(s) at a proposed partner institution, the relevant [proposal form](#) (available on the University website) should be completed and submitted to the Quality Committee for approval.
- 8.6 The form should summarise due diligence activity outcomes (with supporting evidence), in order to demonstrate the following:
- a) that the proposed partner institution is of an appropriate academic standing and, where relevant, has a sound track record of partnership with other higher education institutions
  - b) that there is a good strategic case to support the development of the proposed new partnership in line with institutional and/or school objectives (including endorsement of any underpinning financial arrangements by the Director of Finance and Planning)
  - c) that the proposed partner institution has the legal capacity to enter into a contract with the University
  - d) that the proposed partner institution is financially stable and does not have any business and/or ethical interests or links that might pose a reputational risk to the

University (the Director of Finance and Planning or nominee should be involved in the review of financial due diligence information)

- e) for international partnerships, that in-country recognition requirements have been investigated and, where relevant, met (or there is a clear action plan in place to achieve required recognition)
- f) that the proposed arrangement does not conflict with any existing partnership arrangements
- g) that the learning infrastructure at the partner institution is appropriate to support the needs of students and meet the requirements of the module(s) (including physical resources, learning resources, and academic and pastoral support and guidance arrangements)
- h) that appropriate arrangements are in place to manage, oversee and support the



**9. Delivery of a University of Suffolk course under a flying faculty model in partnership with others**

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9.1

ii) the Quality Committee for approval to proceed from an academic perspective.

9.7 The form should summarise due diligence activity outcomes (with supporting evidence), in order to demonstrate the following:

- a) that there is a good strategic case to work with the proposed partner institution to support the flying faculty arrangement (including endorsement of any underpinning financial arrangements by the Director of Finance and Planning)
- b) that the proposed partner institution is of an appropriate professional standing and has the legal capacity to enter into a contract with the University
- c) that the proposed partner institution is financially stable and does not have any business and/or ethical interests or links that might pose a reputational risk to the University, with due diligence activity to include consideration of the registered status, ownership and financing of the organisation and internal governance arrangements (the Director of Finance and Planning or nominee should be involved in the review of financial due diligence information)
- d) that the proposed arrangement does not conflict with any existing partnership arrangements
- e) for international arrangements, that in-country recognition requirements have been investigated and, where relevant, met (or there is a clear action plan in place to achieve required recognition)
- f) that the proposed partner institution has an understanding of the UK higher education sector (and the associated culture and ethos) and the capacity to meet associated quality assurance and enhancement requirements
- g) that the proposed partner institution has the capacity to support delivery of the course in the ways proposed, for example the provision of a learning infrastructure appropriate to support the needs of students and the provision of a safe working environment for staff and students
- h) where the proposed partner institution is to be involved in marketing and recruitment activity, that appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure the accuracy of all published information associated with the course and to train relevant partner staff on University recruitment and admissions processes
- i) that appropriate arrangements are in place to manage, oversee and support the delivery of the course, both within the University and at the proposed partner institution
- j) that the proposed arrangement does not present undue risks to the University
- k) the arrangement is fully supported by senior staff from both the University and the proposed partner institution.

- 9.8 Approval of the proposal form by the Portfolio Oversight Committee and the Quality Committee signals permission to progress to Stage 2 of the approval process.

*Approval process stage 2: approval of the course and flying faculty model of delivery*

- 9.9 Where the course involved is a proposed new course or where substantial changes (as determined by the Head of Quality) are required to an existing validated course to allow for delivery under a flying faculty model, the standard University procedure for the validation of new courses should be completed at this second stage (with Stage 1 completed prior to the course validation event).
- 9.10 Alternatively, where the course involved is an existing validated course that does not require substantial modificationflying faculty model,



## **10. Co-delivery of a course in partnership with a professional organisation**

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- 10.1 There may be occasions where an academic school within the University wishes to deliver a course in partnership with a professional organisation, potentially involving co-teaching and use of the partner institution's premises for course delivery. This type of arrangement typically involves partnerships with local organisations that are able to offer expertise in terms of professional skills development within a work-based learning setting, to complement students' academic study at the University.
- 10.2 The course will normally be designed and developed by the University in collaboration with the partner institution, with a member of University staff appointed as Course Leader. The course team may include staff from both institutions (with partner staff to be involved in course delivery and/or assessment subject to approval by the University).
- 10.3 In such situations, students enrolled on the course are registered students of the University of Suffolk and are subject to all University regulations, policies and procedures. The University retains responsibility for ensuring the quality and academic standards of the learning and assessment opportunities provided. Students should have full access to relevant University resources and support services, in addition to relevant resources and support at the partner institution.
- 10.4 All prospective new partner institutions that are intended to be involved in co-delivery of a University course need to go through an initial screening process to determine whether they are suitable for the conduct of higher education provision and for co-delivery of the specific course (Stage 1). This due diligence scrutiny should supplement the standard University procedure



10.9 Approval of the proposal form by the Portfolio Oversight Committee and the Quality Committee signals permission to develop a full course proposal, leading to final approval of the partnership arrangement and the associated course.

Approval process stage 2: approval of the partnership and co-delivered course

10.10 Once initial approval to proceed has been granted by the Portfolio Oversight Committee and the Quality Committee, a more detailed evaluation of the academic and quality assurance aspects of the proposal is undertaken at both institutional and course level. This second stage in the process, involving an approval event, ultimately leads to the approval by Senate of the partnership arrangement and the associated course.

10.11 In addition to reaffirming the due diligence outcomes considered at Stage 1 (see paragraph 10.7), the Stage 2 approval process is designed to ensure that:

- a) the programme of study as a whole provides a coherent, high quality learning experience for students that aligns rangement

- at least one member of University of Suffolk academic staff (where possible from a cognate discipline area outside the relevant academic school)
- one member of senior staff from the proposed partner institution (with no direct responsibility for the proposed course)
- Centre for Academic and International Partnerships representative
- Quality team representative
- Learning Services representative
- Students' Union representative.

10.13 The panel will be serviced by a senior University administrator.

10.14 The relevant academic school at the University of Suffolk, in liaison with the proposed

10.17





- d) the proposed validation arrangement has academic credibility, and the proposed partner institution has experience of delivering comparable programmes at a similar level (or has demonstrable capacity to deliver programmes at that level)
- e)

learning opportunities of an appropriate quality and standard, as well as adequate academic and pastoral support and guidance

- b) the learning infrastructure at the partner institution is appropriate to support the



- s) student representation and feedback mechanisms at module, course and institutional level (including relevant data showing student satisfaction levels)
  - t) internal arrangements within the partner institution for monitoring and review of the quality and academic standard of HE provision (including evidence of recent outputs, such as annual monitoring reports and external examiner reports)
  - u) arrangements for ensuring that published information is complete, accurate and up-to-date, in accordance with Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidance where relevant
  - v) arrangements for ensuring continuity of study in the event of termination of the partnership, including a Student Protection Plan developed in conjunction with the University which reflects relevant guidance from the Office for Students (OfS).
- 11.12 The documentation should be submitted to the University in an agreed electronic format at least four weeks in advance of the validation event. A briefing pack containing relevant documentation (including the partnership proposal document and supporting evidence) is sent to panel members at least three weeks in advance of the event.
- 11.13 It is the duty of the panel to critically examine the proposal, and they will normally undertake discussions with relevant members of staff and students of the proposed partner institution as well as members of staff at the University who will be supporting and overseeing the partnership arrangement. They will also view facilities and resources, including a tour of any online learning environments. Where the approval panel meets at the University of Suffolk, this needs to be backed up by a site visit to the partner institution by a subset of the panel, with a report on the visit forming part of the validation documentation.
- 11.14 Under the delegated authority of Senate, the panel should make a collective judgement regarding the ability of the proposed partner institution to effectively deliver validated provision and the suitability of arrangements for collectively managing the partnership arrangement, leading to a decision on whether to approve the proposed validation arrangement at an institutional level for the recommended period of time (normally five years) either conditionally or unconditionally, or to reject the proposal. The outcome will be recorded in a report which will summarise the panel's discussions and conclusions and specify any conditions and/or recommendations that are to be met or responded to by agreed deadlines before the partnership is approved at institutional level.
- 11.15 The report will be submitted to Senate (via the Quality Committee) for information.
- 11.16 The response to conditions and/or recommendations is normally approved by the panel Chair, acting under the delegated authority of Senate and drawing on the advice of other panel members as appropriate. Exceptionally, a conditions meeting will be arranged at the time of the institutional validation.

- 11.17 Further guidance on the institutional validation process and the conduct of the institutional validation event is available in the [Quality Manual](#) on the University website.

*Approval process stage 3: course level validation*

- 11.18 Once institutional validation has been secured, each course (or group of courses) to be offered by the partner institution under the validation arrangement is subject to an approval process. This is conducted in accordance with the University of Suffolk [procedure for the validation of new courses at partner institutions](#).

*Approval of the validation agreement*

- 11.19 Following confirmation of institutional validation, a formal collaboration agreement must be drawn up which sets out the rights and obligations of both parties. The agreement must include an appropriate exit strategy in the event of the termination or expiry of the agreement, in accordance with the agreed Student Protection Plan. The agreement should be drafted by the Centre for Academic and International Partnerships in consultation with relevant academic schools and professional services departments, drawing on advice from the University's solicitors.
- 11.20 The final draft of the agreement should be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval and signature by the

mitigated. They play a key role in ensuring that the partner upholds the University's expectations in terms of quality and academic standards.

- 11.23 The appointment of any new partner staff to be involved in course delivery and/or assessment for validated provision is subject to approval by the University through the submission of a CV to the Centre for Academic and International Partnerships.



- a) that there is a good strategic case to support the development of the proposed new partnership in line with institutional and/or school objectives (including endorsement of any underpinning financial arrangements by the Director of Finance and Planning)
- b) the proposed partner institution is of an appropriate academic standing and, where relevant, has a sound track record of partnership with other higher education institutions
- c) the mission and educational objectives of the proposed partner institution are consistent with those of the University
- d) the proposed partner institution has experience of delivering comparable programmes at a similar level (or has demonstrable capacity to deliver programmes at that level)
- e) the proposed partner institution has an understanding of the UK higher education sector (and its culture and ethos) and the capacity to meet associated quality assurance and enhancement requirements
- f) the proposed partner institution has the legal capacity to enter into a contract with the University and, for international partnerships, in-country recognition requirements have been investigated and, where relevant, met (or there is a clear action plan in place to achieve required recognition)
- g) the proposed partner institution is financially stable and does not have any business and/or ethical interests or links that might pose a reputational risk to the University, with due diligence activity to include

*Approval process stage 2: institutional approval*

- 12.9 Once initial approval to proceed has been granted, a more detailed evaluation of the academic and quality assurance aspects of the proposal is undertaken at institutional level. This second stage in the process, involving an institutional approval event, ultimately leads to the approval of the partnership arrangement by Senate. This paves the way for the approval of the partner's ability to delivered individual franchised courses (Stage 3).











## **13. Dual or multiple awards**

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### 13.1

- b) the proposed partner institution(s) are of an appropriate academic standing and, where relevant, have a sound track record of partnership with other higher education institutions
- c) the mission and educational objectives of the proposed partner institution(s) are consistent with those of the University
- d) the proposed partner institution(s) have experience of delivering comparable programmes at a similar level (or have demonstrable capacity to deliver programmes at that level)
- e) the proposed partner institution(s) have an understanding of the UK higher education sector (and its culture and ethos) and the capacity to meet associated quality assurance and enhancement requirements
- f) the proposed partner institution(s) provide a safe working environment for students
- g) the proposed partner institution(s) have the legal capacity to enter into a contract with the University and, for international partnerships, in-country recognition requirements have been investigated and, where relevant, met (or there is a clear action plan in place to achieve required recognition)
- h) the proposed partner institution(s) are financially stable and do not have any business and/or ethical interests or links that

Approval process stage 2: approval of the partnership and dual / multiple award

- 13.9 Once initial approval to proceed has been granted by the Portfolio Oversight Committee and Senate, a more detailed evaluation of the academic and quality assurance aspects of the proposal is undertaken at both institutional and course level. This second stage in the process, involving an approval event, ultimately leads to the approval by Senate of the partnership arrangement and the associated dual or multiple award.
- 13.10 In addition to reaffirming the due diligence outcomes considered at Stage 1 (see paragraph 13.6), the Stage 2 approval process is designed to ensure that:
- a) the programme of study as a whole provides a coherent, high quality learning experience for students that aligns with relevant UK reference points (including the FHEQ and relevant subject benchmark statements)
  - b) the proposed partner institution(s) have arrangements in place to ensure that students on the course leading to the dual or multiple award will be provided with teaching and learning opportunities of an appropriate and consistent quality and standard, as well as adequate academic and pastoral support and guidance
  - c) the learning infrastructure at the partner institution(s) is appropriate to support the needs of students and meet the requirements of the awards (including physical resources, learning resources and staffing arrangements)
  - d) the regulations, policies and procedures governing the delivery of the course are appropriate (within the context of relevant UK reference points); meet the requirements of each partner; and are clearly communicated to students
  - e) the legal and contractual relationship of students with each institution, and associated student entitlements, are appropriate and clearly communicated
  - f) appropriate arrangements are in place to manage, oversee and support the partnership arrangement
  - g) appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure the accuracy of all published information associated with the dual or multiple award.
- 13.11 An approval event will be held to consider the proposed partnership and the associated dual or multiple award, usually taking place over a full day. An approval panel will be appointed on behalf of the Quality Committee to consider the proposal and will typically comprise:
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor or nominee (Chair)
  - one external academic subject expert (selected by the University in liaison with the relevant academic school)
  - at least one employer representative (nominated by, but not closely associated with, the course team)
  - at least one member of University of Suffolk academic staff (where possible from a cognate discipline)

- one member of senior staff from each partner institution (with no direct responsibility for the proposed dual or multiple award)
- Centre for Academic and International Partnerships representative
- Quality team representative
- Learning Services representative
- Students' Union representative.

13.12 The panel will be serviced by a senior University administrator.

13.13 The relevant academic school at the University of Suffolk, in liaison with the proposed partner institution(s), should compile the following documentation for consideration by the panel as part of the approval event:

- a) information on the proposed partner institution(s), including evidence of credibility as an academic partner, legal status and capacity to enter into the proposed partnership arrangements
- b) for international collaborations, information on the legal, financial and cultural environment (particularly in relation to quality and standards and language issues) from relevant national government offices and agencies and UK bodies with a presence in the country (e.g. the British Council, UK NARIC and UK government offices)
- c) information on the proposed new course leading to the dual or multiple award (covering the elements of the course to be delivered at all partner institutions and presented in accordance with the documentation requirements for a standard University of Suffolk course validation event, i.e. to include a course validation document, student course handbook, mapping of course and module learning outcomes, staff CVs and HEAR descriptions for each award presented for approval)
- d) arrangements for ensuring

- i) information on how student complaints, appeals and disciplinary matters will be dealt with across all institutions (including copies of relevant policies and procedures)
- j) staffing policies and criteria for the appointment of academic staff at the partner institution
- k) arrangements for course management and administration (including arrangements for the maintenance of student records and monitoring student progression and achievement)
- l) arrangements for ongoing quality monitoring and enhancement (including arrangements for student representation and feedback and for the appointment of an external examiner)
- m) arrangements for the production of transcripts and certificates and for graduation ceremonies (transcripts and certificates should clearly state that the course is taught





## 14. Joint awards

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- 14.1 Under a joint award arrangement, the University of Suffolk and one or more other awarding institution(s) together provide a course leading to a joint award of both, or all, of the institutions. Such arrangements usually involve recognition of credit from the elements of the course delivered at the partner institution(s). While institutions should agree a mutually satisfactory approach to the management of quality and academic standards, each institution remains individually responsible for the quality and academic standard of the joint award.
- 14.2 The development of a joint award should only be considered where degree awarding powers at the relevant level are held by all partner institutions and the proposed partner institution(s) have the necessary legal powers to award a joint degree.
- 14.3 The quality and academic standard of the award should meet the University of Suffolk's expectations in relation to relevant UK reference points (for example the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications and relevant subject benchmark statements), irrespective of the expectations of the partner institution(s). The QAA's [Characteristics Statement for qualifications involving more than one degree-awarding body](#) (October 2015) should also be consulted.
- 14.4 All prospective new joint awards need to go through an initial screening process (Stage 1) to determine whether the partnership arrangement and the proposed new joint award is worthy of further, more detailed scrutiny. Approval to proceed to more detailed scrutiny leads to the development of a full proposal and a formal approval event for the joint award (Stage 2).

### Approval process stage 1: initial approval to proceed to detailed scrutiny

- 14.5 In order to seek initial approval to proceed to more detailed scrutiny, the [joint award proposal form](#) (available on the University website) should be completed and submitted, sequentially, to:
- the Portfolio Oversight Committee for approval to proceed from a strategic, financial and legal perspective
  - the Senate for approval to proceed from an academic perspective.
- 14.6 The form should summarise due diligence activity outcomes (with supporting evidence), in order to demonstrate the following:
- a) that there is a good strategic case to support the development of the proposed new joint award in line with institutional and/or school objectives (including endorsement of any underpinning financial arrangements by the Director of Finance and Planning)
  - b) the proposed partner institution(s) are of an appropriate academic standing and, where relevant, have a sound track record of partnership with other higher education institutions

c) the mission and educational objectives of the proposed partner institution(s) are





- l) arrangements for ongoing quality monitoring and enhancement (including arrangements for student representation and feedback and for the appointment of an external examiner)
  - m) arrangements for the production of transcripts and certificates and for graduation ceremonies (transcripts and certificates should clearly state that the course is taught collaboratively)
  - n) arrangements for ensuring continuity of study in the event of termination of the partnership, including a Student Protection Plan developed in conjunction with the University which reflects relevant guidance from the Office for Students (OfS).
- 14.14 The documentation should be submitted in an agreed electronic format at least four weeks in advance of the approval event. A briefing pack containing relevant documentation is sent to panel members at least three weeks in advance of the event.
- 14.15 It is the duty of the panel to critically examine the proposal, until approval is granted.

Approval of the underpinning legal agreement

14.20



## 15. Exchange agreements and study abroad (including Turing Scheme)

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- 15.1 Exchange arrangements include student and staff exchanges and student mobility programmes under the Turing Scheme. Under such arrangements, individual students studying specified University of Suffolk courses can accrue a maximum of 120 credits at international partner institutions and reciprocal arrangements for partner institution students to study at the University of Suffolk are also in place. For out-going students under such an arrangement, the University of Suffolk agrees to recognise and grant credit for those modules undertaken at the partner institution.
- 15.2 Under an exchange arrangement, the University of Suffolk is responsible for ensuring that the academic standards set and achieved by students at the partner institution are equivalent to those set and achieved by internal students at the same stage of their studies.
- 15.3 Criteria that should be considered in negotiating an exchange agreement include:
- a) the size and type of institution and its academic standing
  - b) projected student demand in both directions
  - c) the quality and academic standard of relevant HE provision
  - d) language of delivery and assessment at the partner institution
  - e) location
  - f) student security
  - g) curriculum alignment
  - h) the reliability of the partner's administrative procedures

### Approval of the proposed exchange arrangement

- 15.4 In order to seek approval for a new exchange arrangement, the [exchange agreement proposal form](#) (available on the University website) should be completed and submitted to the Portfolio Oversight Committee for approval, via the Exchange Agreement sub-group.
- 15.5 The form should summarise due diligence activity outcom3( )-4(activi)6(t)-4(y)11( )6(ou)3(t)-4(com3( )

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## Appendix A: Summary of the approval processes for different types of partnership

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)	Progression and articulation arrangements	Delivery of University modules at a partner institution	Delivery of a University course under a flying faculty model in partnership with others	Co-delivery of a course with a professional organisation	Validation arrangements	Franchise arrangements	Dual, multiple or joint awards	Exchange arrangements (including study abroad)
Portfolio Oversight Committee approval of proposal form (including due diligence outcomes)	<p><i>For arrangements not involving recognition of credit:</i> approval of proposal form by relevant senior staff</p> <p><i>For arrangements involving recognition of credit:</i> Quality Committee approval of proposal form</p> <p><i>Note: proposal form requires endorsement of any financial arrangements by the Director of Finance and Planning</i></p>	<p>Quality Committee approval of proposal form (including due diligence outcomes)</p> <p><i>Note: proposal form requires endorsement of any underpinning financial arrangements by the Director of Finance and Planning</i></p>	<p><i>Stage 1:</i> Portfolio Oversight Committee and Quality Committee approval of flying faculty partnership proposal form (including due diligence outcomes and financial arrangements)</p> <p><i>Stage 2:</i> Course validation event (for new or substantially modified courses) or paper-based approval process informed by site visit (for existing validated courses)</p>	<p><i>Stage 1:</i> Portfolio Oversight Committee and Quality Committee approval of initial proposal form (including due diligence outcomes and costing model)</p> <p><i>Stage 2:</i> Course validation event (including scrutiny of partnership arrangement)</p>	<p><i>Stage 1:</i> Portfolio Oversight Committee and Senate approval of initial proposal form (including due diligence outcomes and costing model)</p> <p><i>Stage 2:</i> Institutional validation event</p>	<p><i>Stage 1:</i> Portfolio Oversight Committee and Senate approval of initial proposal form (including due diligence outcomes and costing model)</p> <p><i>Stage 2:</i> Institutional approval event</p>	<p><i>Stage 1:</i> Portfolio Oversight Committee and Senate approval of initial proposal form (including due diligence outcomes and costing model)</p>	<p>Portfolio Oversight Committee approval of proposal form (including due diligence outcomes)</p> <p><i>Note: proposal form requires endorsement of any underpinning financial arrangements by the Director of Finance and Planning</i></p>