



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
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Partner Periodic Review Policy

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Introduction

- 1 The partner periodic review process is the formal process by which the University is assured of the continuing quality of provision at the partner institution. The process provides a focus on academic standards, quality of teaching and learning whilst engaging with the views of staff and students.
- 2 This policy has been aligned to the Office for Students conditions of registration. The QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, advice and guidance for partnerships which states that awarding organisations monitor and evaluate their partnership arrangements to satisfy themselves that the arrangements are achieving their stated outcomes and that academic standards and quality are being maintained.
- 3 The purpose of a partnership review is to:
 - Ensure that students registered on each higher education course receive a high-quality academic experience.
 - Ensure each cohort of students registered on each higher education course receives resources and support which are sufficient. Including the continued appropriateness and adequacy of the partner's physical resources and facilities.
 - Ensure that students are assessed effectively and that assessments are valid and reliable
 - Explore the academic partner's achievement of appropriate academic standards in its contribution to the delivery of the programme(s) and its understanding of higher education quality and standards in relation to teaching, learning and assessment
 - Review the student experience at the partner including the use of student feedback, learning resources, student support and the accuracy and completeness of published information
 - Assess the success of the operation of the partnership by considering contribution of all teams involved in the operation and support of the partnership
 - Review the staffing in place at the partner institution, levels, focus staff CPD and research activities, and ensure all staff are entered on the partner staff register and are suitable to undertake their duties. consider the range and nature of staff development activity in place at the partner

Principles of the Review

- 4 Periodic Review of the partner institution is undertaken every 5-6 years and aligned to the Agreement renewal date as much as possible. For newly established partnerships with a medium to high risk a full review will take place normally after a maximum of 3 years; for established partnerships or those with low risk reviews will normally take place every 5-6 years. Higher risk partnerships may be subject to more frequent reviews.
- 5 However, in exceptional circumstances, the University Partnerships Board may request a review of partnership arrangements at an earlier date (exceptional review) should evidence come to light that quality and/or standards may be at risk in a partnership arrangement.
- 6 The renewal of the agreement is based on the outcome of the periodic review and is carried out in conjunction with ongoing due diligence including a reassessment of the associated risk and any mitigation that is required.

- 7 The Partnerships Team is responsible for drawing up the schedule for ratification by University Partnerships Board. The schedule remains under review annually as changing partner dynamics may affect the year in which they are reviewed.
- 8 Where a partner institution is in termination and is due to undergo a periodic review in the final year of delivery of the programme, the review will normally be brought forward by one year. This will allow the review panel to make recommendations in relation to the teach-out and the management of student experience throughout the period of transition.
- 9 Where the Partner has one or more programmes delivered on a validation basis, the review will include an academic review of the content of these programmes in addition to a review of their provision. The content of all programmes delivered under a Franchise arrangement will be excluded from consideration as these programmes are subject to scrutiny under the University's standard academic review procedures.
- 10 The preparation for the reviews will be managed by the Partnerships Team, who will liaise with the Partner and BNU School(s) to set the event date, timelines, documentation and panel requirements.

Periodic Review Panel

- 11 The size of the review panel will depend on the volume of partnership activity and breadth of the programme portfolio. The panel is appointed by the Partnership Team representative, who will also act as Secretary at the review event.
- 12 At a minimum, each panel will include: a Chair, Secretary, Internal Academic, External Academic, BNU Student Representative, and Quality Representative. Observers may attend by permission of the Chair.
- 13 The Partnership Tutor is responsible for sourcing and nominating an external academic who understands the subject area and has partnership experience so they can make a sound judgement. Externals are paid a fee for taking part in the review and any travel related costs are reimbursed by the University.
- 14 From the partner, the following should be invited to meet with the panel: the senior management team, programme teaching team and any support staff. The panel should also meet with student representatives.
- 15 The student representatives should be a mix of final year students and, where possible, students who reflect the diversity of the student body. The minimum number of students is six and should range from all the different programmes under review. Where possible, the elected course representative should also be included.
- 16 From the University, the panel will meet with the Partnership Tutor/s and PSE staff holding responsibility for the partnership.
- 17 Quorum will not be established without the presence of the Chair, the nominated internal academic and the Secretary. If unforeseen circumstances prevent an external academic from attending, the event can proceed but every effort should be taken to ensure that an in-absentia report is received from the external.

Roles and Responsibilities

18 Responsibilities are allocated as follows:

Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to approve the event agenda ▪ to approve the external academic reviewer(s) as a member of the panel ▪ to facilitate and ensure the review event is conducted according to the approved process ▪ to ensure all panel members are allowed an equal opportunity to participate in the discussions ▪ to ensure that the partner is assessed comprehensively and objectively ▪ to agree the outcome of the event
Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to inform the partner of the review ▪ to set the review event date and agenda ▪ to organise arrangements for panel members and break-out meetings ▪ to compile and collate documentation ▪ to manage the arrangements of the event e.g. room bookings, hospitality and communications with all parties ▪ to extend invitation to externals ▪ to process external fees and expenses ▪ to prepare the final report and action plan ▪ to advise on matters of process and regulations
Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to read the review event documentation and prepare for the meeting by identifying areas of discussion which will form basis of the questioning of various staff and student groups. ▪ to make a sound judgement on the evidence provided ▪ to make recommendation to enhance activities or identify good practices for dissemination
Partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to prepare a self-evaluation document (SED) ▪ to provide all required documentation to the Secretary as requested and in a timely manner ▪ to manage arrangement of the event e.g. room bookings and hospitality

Documentation

- 19 The main document for the periodic review is the Self-Evaluation Document, which will form the focus of the review event. The document will set the scene for the panel and provide context for the review. This is likely to be the first document read by the panel and must be written collaboratively between the partner and partnership tutor(s).
- 20 Where any such data is required for the production of the SED, the University will be responsible for obtaining and sharing the datasets with its partners. Thresholds for data, for example student attainment, progression and completion are highlighted within the University's Annual Monitoring Policy.

- 21 In preparation for the review, the partner is required to submit all relevant documentation to the Secretary. For overseas partners, all documentation should be submitted in English, with notarised translations of original foreign-language documentation where appropriate.
- 22 Once the documentation has been received, the Secretary will compile an electronic periodic review pack and distribute to all panel members in advance of the event.
- 23 A periodic review pack typically contains the following:
 - Self-Evaluation Document
 - Agenda and Attendee List
 - Partner Periodic Review Policy
 - Operations Manual
 - Partner organisational structures
 - Partner governance structures
 - Examples of marketing material
 - Annual Monitoring Report (from the previous two years)
 - External Examiner Reports (from the previous two years)
 - Programme Committee Action Sheets (from the previous two years)
 - Previous Partner Periodic Review Report & Action Plan (if applicable)
 - National Student Survey Results (if applicable)
 - Staff Profiles including a detailed staffing plan
 - Programme Handbooks
 - Programme Specifications

Review Event

- 24 The periodic review event takes place over a half or full day, depending on the size and nature of the partnership and normally takes place at the partner's prime location. The partner is responsible for liaising with the Secretary to make the arrangements for the day.
- 25 For overseas partners the review event is conducted in three stages as follows:
 - a) A desk-based review of the documentation, followed by a written submission by all panel members
 - b) A site visit to the overseas partner to meet with senior staff, academic teaching team and students
 - c) A panel meeting to conclude the findings of the site visit and outcomes of the review
- 26 Given the logistical challenges of a full panel visiting an overseas partner, at a minimum the Chair and Secretary will undertake the visit.
- 27 The review event must follow a standard agenda template and include a tour of the partner's facilities. Further breakout meetings will occur as follows:

Senior Management Meeting

- 28 The review event usually starts with a meeting with the partner management, to discuss any matters relating to governance, management and leadership of the partner and discuss strategic plans and future direction.

Academic Teaching Team Meeting

- 29 The agenda will include a block of time in which the panel will discuss scholarly and research activity, staff development, learning and teaching activity with the partner academic team. This

meeting will also focus on student support mechanisms and the overall student experience and employability aspects.

Student Meeting

- 30 A meeting will be held with a group of students to discuss academic practices, support mechanisms, concerns and/or general experiences. The student meeting will supplement the written information provided in the review documentation, e.g. summaries of NSS results and actions taken in programme committees, in order to provide the panel with a comprehensive view of the mechanisms used to gain student feedback, the adequacy of these mechanisms, and whether feedback provides evidence of the satisfactory nature of the student experience.

University meeting

- 31 The panel will meet with the partnership tutor(s) and PSE staff from the University, to discuss operational and quality matters and support mechanisms affecting the partnership.

Areas for Discussion

- 32 Where possible, similar themes should be explored at each periodic review event. Below is a list of areas which could be addressed:

Student Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student feedback and representation ▪ Supporting students whilst they undertake the programme, both academic and pastoral ▪ Access to online and physical resources ▪ Escalating or raising a complaint
Quality and Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Suitability and credentials of the partner staff to teach the curriculum ▪ Staff engagement with the wider sector in relation to research and professional development activities ▪ Staff development
Teaching, Learning & Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effectiveness of teaching and learning approaches ▪ Marking, Moderation and Feedback
Employability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preparing students for the world of work ▪ Links with potential employers ▪ Supporting students through the course to enhance their overall employability
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communication channels ▪ Support provided by the University ▪ Partnership Tutor role ▪ Resources and physical facilities

Outcomes and Periodic Review Report

- 33 Towards the conclusion of the review event, panel members are required to meet in private for the panel to reach its conclusions based on discussions from the above groups. A unanimous decision of the panel is required for the conclusion of the review event.
- 34 The panel is required to conclude on the following areas:
- Commendations and areas of innovation
 - Quality & Standards
 - The Partnership
 - Recommendations for enhancements (for either the partner and/or the University)
- 35 A report of the event will be prepared by the Secretary and shared with the Partner and Partnership Tutor(s) for consideration and to formulate a response and action plan.
- 36 The final periodic review report will be submitted to University Partnerships Board with an executive summary to Education Committee and Joint Senate Council. The authority for final approval rests with University Partnerships Board.

Table of Definitions

Agreement	A legally binding document including any annex and/or appendix and/or schedule, which shall be deemed to form a part of an Agreement.
Due Diligence	The investigation or exercise that the University must undertake before entering into an academic partnership agreement.
Office for Student	Means the non-departmental public body of the Department for Education, acting as the regulator and competition authority for the higher education sector in England or any successor body which carries out substantially the same function.
Operations Manual	The formal document agreed by the Parties and issued annually by the University specifying the responsibilities of each Party and the procedures to be followed.
Partnership Team	the division of the University's Commercial and Business Development Directorate which oversees all collaborative partnership arrangements.
Partnership Tutor	the tutor appointed by the University to have oversight of the Programmes on the University's behalf in accordance with the requirements of relevant University Policies and Regulations.

Programme Specification	the document describing the Programme aims, learning outcomes and the means by which these learning outcomes are achieved and assessed, structure, entry requirements and any other Programme-specific items, as amended by the University from time to time.
University Partnerships Board	Reports to APC and holds delegated responsibility for the development and maintenance of the University's Partnerships Strategy and operational framework; exercising effective managerial responsibility in respect of partnership arrangements; and monitoring student achievement and the quality of the student experience for those registered under a partnership arrangement.
Validation Arrangement	A programme leading to a recognised award of the University, designed and delivered by a partner but quality assured by the University.

Appendix: Equality Impact Assessment

An EqlA helps us to reach better evidenced outcomes first time. They analyse how all our work might impact differently on different people.

1. What is changing and why?				
The current procedures for partner periodic reviews falls under the University's Periodic Review Policy which covers both academic schools and partnerships. Over the years there has been a need to adjust the way partners are reviewed, with greater emphasis on the purpose of the reviews and overarching principles. It was therefore agreed between the Partnerships Team and the Academic Registry Head of Quality & Standards to produce a partner only periodic review policy.				
2. What do you know?				
The student demographic of our partners is mature, from BAME backgrounds and widening participation. Some partners have a high proportion of students from European countries such as Romania. The new and upcoming Equality Strategy, when implemented will be used to reconsider any of the below aspects as required. Attainment gaps and any measures to assess equality impact are considered mainly within the Partner Annual Monitoring Policy.				
3. Assessing the impact				
	Could benefit	May adversely impact	What does this mean? <i>Impacts identified from what you know (actual and potential)</i>	What can you do? <i>Actions (or why no action is possible) to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination, and foster good relations</i>
a) How could this affect different ethnicities? <i>Including Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showmen and Boaters, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The representation of the student body selected in the review process, requires a diverse sample. This is monitored by the Secretary of the event in collaboration with the partner.	Review the demographic of the partner and select according to this.
b) How could this affect cisgender and transgender men and women (including maternity/pregnancy impact), as well as non-binary people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The representation of the student body selected in the review process, requires a diverse sample. This is monitored by the Secretary of the event in collaboration with the partner.	Review the demographic of the partner and select according to this.
c) How could this affect disabled people or carers? <i>Including neurodiversity,</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Generally, disability declaration at partner institutions is very low.	Partners encouraged to collect the data from students, however there are cultural barriers around this. This is monitored through annual monitoring.

<i>invisible disabilities and mental health conditions.</i>				
d) How could this affect people from different faith groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some overseas partners need to consider different faiths and can plan teaching delivery around religious holidays. Generally, this seems to work fine and is inclusive of all faiths.	
e) How could this affect people with different sexual orientations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	It is not anticipated that there will be any impact, but this can be reviewed, and guidance updated if required.	
f) How could this affect different age groups or generations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	It is not anticipated that there will be any impact, but this can be reviewed, and guidance updated if required.	
g) How could this affect those who are married or in a civil partnership?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	It is not anticipated that there will be any impact, but this can be reviewed, and guidance updated if required.	
h) How could this affect people from different backgrounds such as: socio-economic disadvantage, homeless, alcohol and/or substance misuse, people experiencing domestic and/or sexual violence, ex-armed forces, looked after children and care leavers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is one UK partner that fits into this category; however, the same principles will apply.	
i) How could this affect people with multiple intersectional experiences?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	It is not anticipated that there will be any impact, but this can be reviewed, and guidance updated if required.	
4. Overall outcome				

No major change needed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Adjust approach <input type="checkbox"/>	Adverse impact but continue <input type="checkbox"/>	Stop and remove <input type="checkbox"/>
5. Details of further actions needed			
Approval by the relevant committees: Senate.			
6. Arrangements for delivery and future monitoring			
Internal consultations have occurred with various stakeholders and the policy has been passed through the relevant committees and governance structures. Once approved the policy will be made available on the University website and communicated to all staff via BEN. For external comms, the Partnerships Team will be sharing the updated policy with all Partners and signposting them to the changes and associated templates.			
7. Completed by:	Shabana Hussain	Principal Partnerships Officer	Date 23/09/2022
8. Signed off by:	Ian Harper	Director Commercial & Business Development	Date 25/11/2022



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