UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

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Guidance on the External Review of Collaborative Arrangements

Quality Assurance Team
qat@leeds.ac.uk

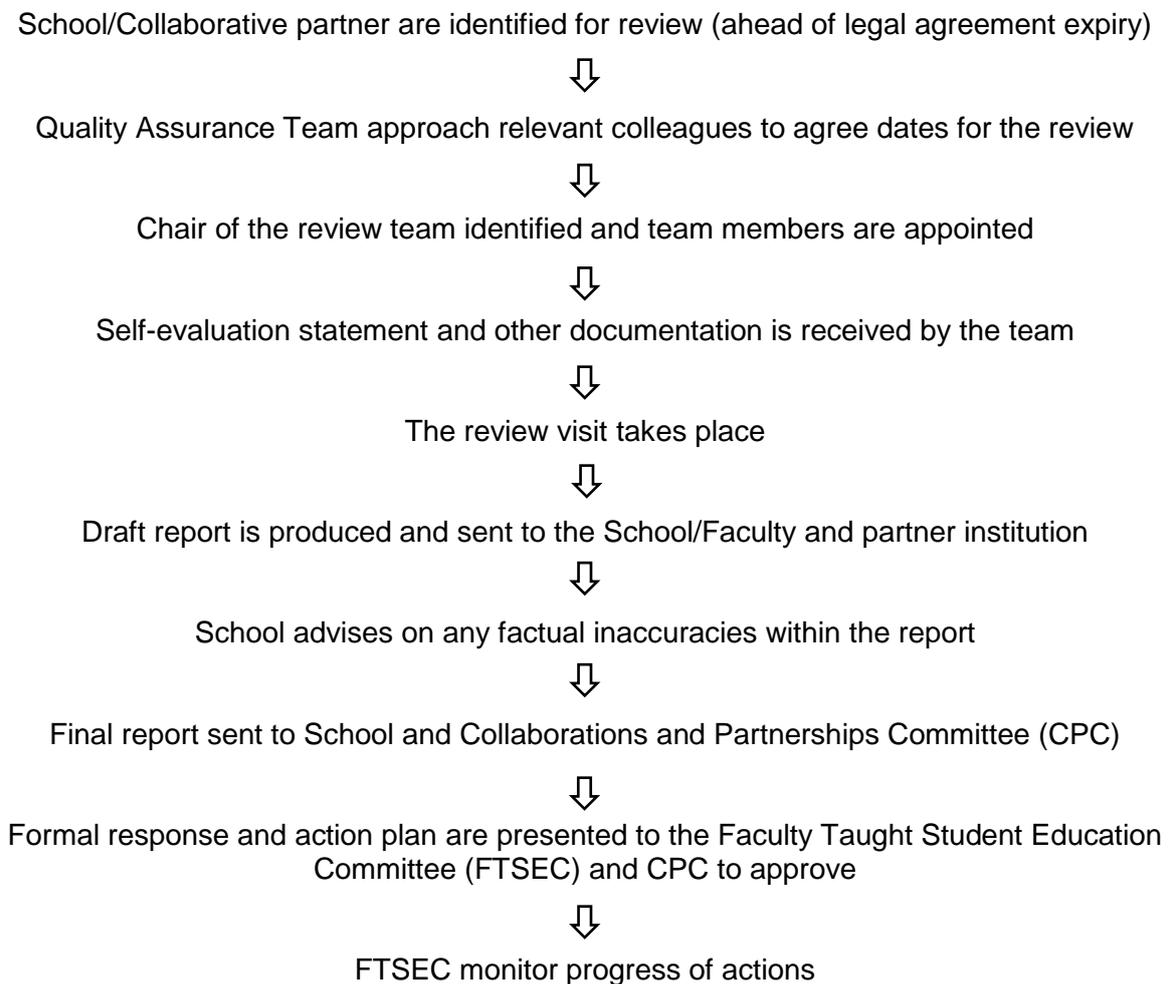# Introduction

Review of Collaborative Provision

All arrangements that formally constitute collaborative provision[1] are subject to a periodic review process. The Review is the principal means by which the University is assured of the efficacy and robustness of the collaborative arrangement, in relation to the quality of its learning opportunities and academic standards. It is also the mechanism by which the renewal of the legal agreement governing the arrangement is approved.

The guidance in this document specifically relates to the process of review for off-campus, joint delivery and advanced collaborative arrangements. It does not cover arrangements that are categorised as low risk (progression agreements), which do not formally constitute collaborative provision, as it is expected that these will be monitored via the school/faculty's existing rolling review processes.

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[1] The award of academic credit that is delivered, assessed or supported in partnership between two or more organisations (Quality Assurance Agency, 2018)

Process

Stages of the Review Process

School/Collaborative partner are identified for review (ahead of legal agreement expiry)

⇩

Quality Assurance Team approach relevant colleagues to agree dates for the review

⇩

Chair of the review team identified and team members are appointed

⇩

Self-evaluation statement and other documentation is received by the team

⇩

The review visit takes place

⇩

Draft report is produced and sent to the School/Faculty and partner institution

⇩

School advises on any factual inaccuracies within the report

⇩

Final report sent to School and Collaborations and Partnerships Committee (CPC)

⇩

Formal response and action plan are presented to the Faculty Taught Student Education Committee (FTSEC) and CPC to approve

⇩

FTSEC monitor progress of actions

Information, Documentation and Meetings

Purpose and remit of the review
The University engages in a range of collaborative activity, managed on a day-to-day basis by the school or faculty parenting the programme, and reviewed periodically in common with all other modes of provision. Responsibility for organising and discharging the review process resides with the Quality Assurance Team.

The purpose of the Periodic Review process is to assure the University of the quality and standards of the collaborative partner, the collaborative arrangement and the School's management of the partnership. This review process is separate from the University's Student Academic Experience Review process, which has responsibility for reviewing the School's internal arrangements and the academic dimensions of all its provision, including any collaborative programmes. The Periodic Review of collaborative arrangements, however, is intended to focus specifically on the programme(s) involved in the collaboration in accordance with the level of contribution the partner institution makes to its delivery. The outcome of the review will be underpinned by an assessment of the University's confidence in the present and likely management of the collaborative arrangement, and the quality of its learning opportunities and academic standards. The Review will also make an informed recommendation with the regard to the renewal of the legal agreement governing the arrangement.

The review team

The team will normally comprise:	Chair of the Collaborations and Partnerships Committee (or an appropriate nominee)[2]
	1 member from the Faculty leading the Collaboration
	1 External member
and be supported by:	1 or 2 members from the Quality Assurance Team

The size and membership of the review team will vary according to the nature, size and scope of the collaborative arrangement.

Prior to the visit
The School will supply QAT with a brief self-evaluation statement, conforming to a set template, three weeks before the review visit. This will be forwarded to all team members. In response to this, the external reviewer will produce an evaluative report. In addition, the team will receive the following information in advance (if appropriate):

- Student handbook
- Copy of last University periodic review report and School response
- Copy of the legal agreement
- Statistics showing the numbers of students enrolled on the programme for the last three years, including progression/classification data
- Copy of programme specification and relevant module specifications
- Programme Reviews for the last 3 years

The self-evaluation statement
This statement should be a succinct but evaluative description of the arrangement compiled by the School in consultation with the Collaborative Partner and with the assistance of a set of structured guidance. It will comprise the following sections:

- *Overview of collaboration*

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[2] This could be a Faculty Pro-Dean (Student Education) or another member of the University with relevant experience of review

- *Details of the strategic rationale for the provision and analysis of financial viability*
- *Details of how the programme and collaboration are managed*
- *Details of the Quality Assurance arrangements, including provision for student evaluation and student representation and consideration of student education metrics*
- *Publicity, admissions and student support*
- *Details of assessment and feedback*

The self-evaluation statement should be approved by the Head of School, and be informed by discussions at School and Faculty Executives if appropriate, to ensure that the ongoing strategic and financial case for the collaboration has been considered and endorsed.

Meetings

The review will comprise a series of meetings with staff and students together with a site visit as appropriate. The list of meetings below is intended to provide a model of how reviews will normally take place. It should be noted, however, that reviews will be designed to fit the nature of the collaborative arrangement and the structure could be amended (in consultation with the parties concerned), for instance the size of the provision and its location may mean that a review takes place over a period of time rather than a single day.

First meeting of the review team

The initial meeting of the review team will identify issues to be pursued during the course of the review visit. This will be based upon analysis of the self-evaluation statement and the advance documentation. At the end of this meeting a number of issues will have been identified as agenda items for each of the meetings with staff and students. Further areas will be added as meetings take place and following review of any additional documentation made available by the school and/or collaborative partner.

Meeting 1: University programme team

This meeting provides the opportunity to discuss how the collaborative arrangement operates and to explore issues arising from the SES and the supporting documentation. The meeting will explore the ways in which the University staff ensure the quality and standards of the provision which is delivered with the collaborative partner and how it fits with the provision delivered at the University. There will be a focus on the facilities and structures available to students at the collaborative partner and the ways in which students are supported.

Meeting 2: Students

The meeting with students usually takes place in private over a sandwich lunch and will include discussion of matters relating to their experience on the programme and with the school/partner. The attendees will be agreed with the School/collaborative partner in advance of the visit to ensure a representative selection of students is present.

Meeting 3: Collaborative partner programme team and site visit

The meeting with the collaborative programme team will explore further the issues raised in the meeting with University staff and the self-evaluation statement. The review team will investigate how effectively the collaborative partner's staff have been inducted into University procedures, for example, in relation to assessment procedures and practices. The review team will also ask about how staff from the collaborative partner are integrated with the development of the programme, and the ways in which the students are supported. Depending on the nature of the collaboration, a site visit may be required.

Final meeting of the team: consideration of feedback and identifying areas for comment

The team will consider the categories under which the self-evaluation statement was compiled and will identify strengths and weaknesses under each section. On the basis of its findings the team will reach a conclusion as to the level of confidence that can be expressed

in the collaborative arrangement, the partner institution and the School's management of the arrangement. A number of points will be prepared which will form the basis for the feedback, these will be expanded in the final team report prepared after the visit.

Meeting 4: Feedback
The feedback meeting will be presented by the Chair with all members of the team normally present. It is for the School to determine whether the feedback is to be delivered to all or just a small group of staff and where possible a representative of the collaborative partner should be present. The Chair of the review team will advise that the feedback will not necessarily cover all the points eventually covered within the written report, but **all** substantive issues will be raised at this point.

Review report
A written report of the review will be prepared, structured around the principal headings used to compile the self-evaluation statement. It will consist of a commentary on each aspect together with an overall statement of the level of confidence that can be expressed in the collaborative arrangement, and recommendations will be made for development and enhancement. The report will also confirm the review team's judgment regarding the renewal of the governing legal agreement. The report will be delivered to the School within 6 weeks of the date of the visit and the School will be given the opportunity, in consultation with the collaborative partner as appropriate, to seek clarification on any issues raised and correction of errors of fact. The School will be asked to respond to the report and, if appropriate, to draw up an action plan addressing the issues raised. Both the report and the School's response will be forwarded to the Collaborations and Partnerships Committee for consideration and then forwarded to the relevant Faculty Taught Student Education Committee. FTSEC will have responsibility for ensuring that any actions highlighted as a result of the review are implemented.

Guidance to the Review Team

It is anticipated that each member will read and assess the self-evaluation statement and other documentation ahead of the Review. It is helpful if, as part of this process, each member of the team identifies aspects of the self-evaluation statement or documentation that require further discussion or clarification, or highlight good practice. Discussion of these identified areas will contribute to the development of agendas for the different meetings throughout the review visit.

The following checklist may be useful in assisting team members with reviewing the documentation:

Overview of collaboration
- Current organisation of the collaborative arrangement including nature of the arrangement and the delivery contribution of the collaborative partner
- Strategy and future developments
- Details of the University committees responsible for oversight of the collaboration

Management of the Collaboration
- Details of any School/partner committees and their responsibilities
- Details of where responsibility for teaching, assessment and non-academic support lies
- Details of the provision of IT, library and study accommodation facilities
- Complaints and appeals

Details of Quality Assurance arrangements
- Details for internal review of the provision
- Details of External Examiners and their reports
- Arrangements for the consideration of reports from the collaborative partner
- Arrangements for student evaluation of provision
- Arrangements for student representation

Publicity, Admissions, Student support and guidance
- Details of how publicity of the arrangement is managed
- Provision of information available to prospective and current students
- Recruitment, admission, registration and enrolment processes
- Health, safety and welfare issues

Staffing
- Details of the staff involved in the collaborative aspect of the programme, the extent of their involvement and their status

Assessment and Examination
- Arrangements for the setting of assessments and examinations
- Arrangements for marking and moderation
- Arrangements for the external examination of student work arising from the collaboration
- Arrangements for the classification of student degrees

Meetings

The meetings set out below may be amended in order to fit the nature of the collaboration. It would be normal for the questions asked of the University programme team to be asked of the collaborative partner programme team and vice-versa.

The following are suggested as possible areas for discussion at both the meeting of the University Programme Team and the Collaborative Partner programme team:

- Issues identified by the Self-Evaluation Statement
- Issues arising from the most recent Periodic Review of the School
- Rationale for the collaboration
- Facilities available to the students
- Admissions arrangements
- Arrangements for assessments and examinations – moderation, involvement of collaborative partner staff
- How the collaboration is managed?
- How are standards maintained?
- Quality assurance issues, including module and programme review
- Staff development and training induction of staff in the context of the collaboration (both staff from the Collaborative partner and the University)
- Collaborative Partner staff involvement in development of programme materials
- Collaborative Partner staff involvement in the delivery of the curriculum
- Collaborative Partner staff opportunity for feedback to University staff
- Collaborative Partner staff opportunity for staff development

3. Students
(*The questions below are intended as a guide rather than a prescriptive list, and should be used selectively in respect of the collaborative aspects of the programme. Some questions may not be appropriate for certain types of collaboration*).

Choosing the University
- Why did they choose the programme?
- Did they attend any Open Days? Did they have an interview?
- Were they given plenty / sufficient / helpful information?

Induction Process
- Did they receive any information from the School/partner institution before they started?
- What information were they given when they arrived?
- Was there an induction session for new students? Did it include details of the collaboration?
- How did they find out about library, IT and VLE (Minerva) provision?
- Provision of student handbooks – School, Programme, Module? What is the main source of information in relation to their programme?

Student Education
- Is the currency of the curriculum appropriate? How students are made aware of this?
- How appropriate and thorough is the curriculum?
- If there is a placement option, how does this fit with the curriculum? Is support available before, during and after the placement?
- Have they been given opportunities to engage with employability initiatives and develop transferable skills?

Personal Tutoring
- Arrangements for personal tutoring (where appropriate to the collaboration)?
- How often do they meet their personal tutors and what do the meetings involve?
- Do staff from the collaborative partner contribute to personal tutoring?

Assessment and Feedback
- Is there a range of assessment practices for the different modules: assessed essays, exams, projects, MCQs, projects, blogs, etc?
- Are assessment deadlines reasonable (well publicised and adequately spaced)?
- What is the range of formative and summative feedback available to students? How useful and informative is the feedback?

Student Feedback on the programme
- How does the School obtain feedback from students on the different programmes? Module/programme questionnaires? Does this include feedback on the collaborative partner?
- Does the information feed into any other discussions?
- Do they get feedback on feedback?
- Does the information go to Student:Staff Committee or is it included in the annual /biennial programme review?

Student:Staff Committees
- How often does it meet?
- How well does it operate?
- Are the minutes made available to students afterwards?
- How do students find out how any issues raised have been dealt with?

Resources
- Library facilities
- Computing facilities
- Laboratory facilities
- Social facilities
- Students' views of general University/collaborative partner facilities