

## EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS CODE OF PRACTICE

### 1. INTRODUCTION, DEFINITIONS AND OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

For any partnership arrangement leading to credit or an award of the University, Keele must take ultimate responsibility for the academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities in respect to its academic provision and awards, irrespective of where these are delivered or who provides them. This Code of Practice aims to ensure that arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with a partner are implemented securely and managed effectively. Within this context, the University adopts a risk-based approach to ensure that the effort invested is commensurate with the complexity of the collaboration, and the risk associated with the partnership as ascertained through due diligence and the collaboration itself. The University endeavours to be responsive and flexible in its approach to pursuing new opportunities and will respond to timescales for the approval of new partnership arrangements based on the capacity of respective University teams and the contribution of the proposed partner/s. It should however be recognised that in adopting a risk-based approach, the University will not compromise its ability to assure the quality and standards of its awards, or that of the student experience.

#### 1.1 Purpose

1.1.1 This version of the Code of Practice replaces the 2023 version of the Code of Practice. This version of the Code of Practice has been developed in line with external expectations set out in the Office for Students (OfS) Regulatory Framework and Quality and Standards Conditions of Registration, and has been updated to reflect revisions to the University's Professional Services and committee structure, with revisions to key procedures informed through continued enhancement and external developments including the UK Quality Assurance Agency's UK Quality Code for Higher Education and its associated principles, advice and guidance.

1.1.2 This Code of Practice should be read in conjunction with the specific educational partnerships supplementary guides and forms which are referenced throughout this document and which are available on the University's [Educational Partnerships Team Intranet pages](#). Oversight of the guides and forms is the responsibility of the Educational Partnerships Committee (EPC) on behalf of the University's Education Committee.

1.1.3 The University recognises that more broadly, partnership activities refer to a wide range of models of partnership and set of arrangements. This Code of Practice encompasses a number of partnership models currently in operation, including the delivery of provision leading to the award of academic credit or a Keele degree at undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research level where this delivery takes place in locations away from the main University premises in association with a partner or collaborator. This Code of Practice articulates a shared understanding

of the nature of educational-based, and Collaborative Provision partnerships wherever they occur and clarifies the necessary quality assurance requirements to ensure the University meets its responsibilities as an OfS registered degree awarding body, and its duty of care and contractual obligations to students, external stakeholders such as Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) and to its partners. The University recognises that the boundaries between different types of partnership arrangements can often be fluid and new or expanded collaborations may be considered hybrids of the arrangements described in Section 1.3. As such, variations of the procedures set out in this Code of Practice may be considered, such variations will be confirmed by the Educational Partnerships Team.

## 1.2 Scope

1.2.1 This Code of Practice covers a wide range of partnership activities, including Validations, Franchises, Joint and/or Dual Awards, and Flying Faculty/Off-Site Delivery. Section 1.3 lists in more detail which types of arrangements fall under this Code of Practice. The procedures set out in this Code of Practice will normally apply to all new and expanded partnerships broadly aligning to models referred to in section 1.3 unless otherwise determined by the Educational Partnerships Team, with a continued expectation all new and expanded partnerships are approved by designated governance bodies within the University, as set out in this Code of Practice.

1.2.2 There are a number of areas of partnership activity which do not fall under this Code of Practice. Examples of provision not covered in this Code of Practice include recruitment-based partnerships as defined in the Recruitment Partnerships Procedure managed by the International Partnerships Development Team based within the Global Student Recruitment and Admissions Directorate, work-based learning or practice-based learning managed by the Employability and Employer Engagement Team based within Student Services, student and staff mobility arrangements, including study abroad, summer schools and short courses, managed by the Global Opportunities Team based in Student Services, online learning and Continuous Professional Development (CPD). In addition, the University may pursue strategic partnerships at an institutional scale that require a different approach to approval, implementation and ongoing operational delivery and management to that set out in this Code of Practice. In these instances, partnerships will be pursued under measures approved by University Executive Committee (UEC).

## 1.3 Definitions

1.3.1 This Code of Practice covers specifically the following arrangements which are defined below. The partnership models considered to be of high risk, namely those classified as 'Collaborative Provision' are defined here as 'educational provision leading to an award, or to specific credit towards an award, of an awarding body delivered and/or supported and/or assessed through an arrangement with a partner organisation'.

1.3.2 **Co-Delivery:** A partnership model classified as Collaborative Provision, this describes an arrangement whereby the awarding body delivers a programme either on the home campus or away from the home campus with the help of another organisation. Teaching is carried out by both the awarding body and the partner. In some cases, the partner may also provide the facilities in which compulsory learning and teaching activities take place. In most cases all responsibilities for managing the partnership are covered by the awarding body.

**1.3.3 Dual Award:** A partnership model classified as Collaborative Provision, this is a combined package of study leading to separate qualifications awarded by separate awarding bodies. The award titles and learning outcomes for the awards may differ dependent on the extent of curriculum overlap. In most cases students will study at each awarding body for a designated period of time. While a dual award programme may be based on an existing programme/s either at the partner/s or at Keele, it should normally be structured as a joint initiative, designed and developed by contributing partners to offer a distinctive learning experience.

**1.3.4 Dual PhD:** A partnership model classified as Collaborative Provision, a Dual PhD enables postgraduate researchers (PGRs) to receive separate PhD awards from multiple (normally two) awarding bodies involved in a research degree programme, following research undertaken by the PGR with each awarding body. In most cases both awarding bodies would administer their own quality assurance, standards and examination and regulatory processes. Following successful completion, the PGR will receive a separate award and degree certificate from each contributing awarding body.

**1.3.5 Franchise:** A partnership model classified as Collaborative Provision, this is where an existing Keele programme or award is designed, assessed and quality assured by Keele but delivered by an approved partner. Successful students graduate with a Keele award. The partner will usually conduct all teaching and initial marking associated with the programme, with Keele undertaking moderation. Keele may delegate the recruitment and selection of students to the partner subject to agreed admissions criteria and monitoring arrangements. Keele remains fully responsible for the quality of the student learning experience and academic standards of the award. For this reason, Keele would not normally agree to a serial franchise arrangement.

**1.3.6 Joint Award/Programme:** A partnership model classified as Collaborative Provision, in which Keele and one or more awarding bodies collaborate to design, deliver and assess a programme. In most cases students will study at each awarding body for a designated period of time. Following successful completion, the student will receive a single award and a single degree certificate, which carries the logos of all contributing awarding bodies.

**1.3.7 Joint PhD:** A partnership model classified as Collaborative Provision, a Joint PhD enables PGRs to receive a single Joint PhD award for the collaborative research undertaken with multiple awarding bodies. Each awarding body would contribute to a jointly agreed framework for quality assurance, standards and examination and regulatory procedures. Following successful completion, the PGR will receive a single award and a single degree certificate, which carries the logos of all contributing awarding bodies. Often a Joint PhD arrangement is characterised by:

- PGRs meeting the academic requirements of each awarding body;
- A joint governance and regulatory framework;
- Joint supervision of PGRs by nominated and qualified staff at each awarding body;
- A single degree awarded for one PhD thesis jointly recognised by each awarding body;
- Certificate indicating there has been joint supervision.

**1.3.8 Off-Site Delivery Overseas (including Flying Faculty):** A partnership model classified as Collaborative Provision, this is where members of Keele staff provide block teaching at a partner overseas, often supplemented by asynchronous and synchronous online learning. The partner may provide access to facilities and learning resources and/or provide local additional academic support. Due to the particular challenges presented by flying faculty arrangements (students studying under flying faculty arrangements will be expected to understand and study UK higher education conventions whilst not being immersed in them, and the challenges of the University providing ongoing educational support at a distance, alongside potential legal and taxation challenges), these arrangements are subject to formal approval by UEC. Off-site delivery in the UK is not considered Collaborative Provision for the purposes of this Code of Practice, however arrangements in which the University's provision is delivered at a UK partner, delivered by University staff, must still take account of practical programme delivery and operational requirements, and the broader student support requirements and student experience.

**1.3.9 Programme Endorsement:** This is a service in which Keele endorses an external organisation, a service provided by an external organisation or an educational programme, typically designed and delivered by an external organisation. Endorsement of any nature does not lead to Keele credit or an award and does not offer assurances regarding the outcomes at the level of the individual student. Those studying an endorsed organisation's programme are not registered as students at Keele and the endorsement may only demonstrate that Keele believes an aspect of the organisation's programme is in line with its own standards in the area it has endorsed.

Models for programme endorsement include:

**Programme Endorsement:** In this model Keele undertakes an initial review of an external organisation's programme to confirm whether it has clearly set out learning objectives, format, teaching and learning activities, appropriate resources and materials, transparent documentation and certification, as well as appropriately qualified staff delivering the programme. The endorsement would be conditional on a successful annual review. Programme Endorsement does not indicate that Keele quality assures the external organisation's programme, nor delivers or awards Keele credit, but indicates Keele endorses the organisation's approach to programme design and delivery, in line with Keele's own standards.

**Quality Assured Endorsement:** In this model, Keele quality assures the provision of an external organisation, undertaking a more detailed review of the external organisation's provision, expanding on the review carried out for Programme Endorsement with an additional review of the assessment design, learning outcomes, marking and moderation practices, student achievement and retention outcomes. The endorsement would be conditional on a successful annual review and all review activity must be undertaken by Keele academic staff with subject expertise. Subject to a successful review, the status of

the external provider's programme would be 'quality assured by Keele University' and this can be reflected in promotional material. Keele would only provide a quality assured status of endorsement in disciplines where it has academic expertise and where the organisation's provision has an academic dimension to merit endorsement from a higher education provider.

**Services Endorsement:** In this model Keele endorses a particular service provided by an external organisation, in a similar way to Programme Endorsement, but with a particular focus on a service or services provided by the external organisation, in line with the Keele's standards and expectations. Under this model, the relevant Keele Professional Service would undertake a review of the external organisation's service annually.

**1.3.10 Split Site PhD:** A partnership model classified as Collaborative Provision, this is defined as a research degree which leads to a Keele award but is dependent on a partner organisation and supervision from a partner organisation, and involves PGRs being registered for a research degree at Keele whilst spending a significant period of their research away from the University, at another approved organisation, which can, but does not have to be, overseas. All Split Site PhDs require a formal agreement between Keele and the partner(s), with specific details on the arrangements pertaining to a PGR's research experience set out in the offer letter issued by Keele.

**1.3.11 Validation:** A partnership model classified as Collaborative Provision, this is where a programme is developed, delivered and assessed by a partner whilst being quality assured and ultimately awarded by Keele. Keele is responsible for ensuring the standards of the programme are equivalent to its own programmes. In exceptional circumstances, where Keele does not offer a comparable programme, Keele will carefully benchmark the standards of the validated programme against comparable programmes offered elsewhere in the UK higher education sector. As the awarding body, Keele remains fully responsible for the quality of the student learning experience and academic standards of the provision leading to a University award.

**1.3.12** For further information on the models of PGR partnerships and their requirements, please refer to the PGR Partnerships Framework available on the University's [Educational Partnerships Team Intranet pages](#) and as an appendix to this Code of Practice ([Appendix 1](#)).

**1.3.13** For further information on the models of recruitment-based partnerships and their requirements, please refer to the Recruitment Partnerships Procedure available on the University's [Educational Partnerships Team Intranet pages](#) and as an appendix to this Code of Practice ([Appendix 2](#)).

## 1.4 Principles for Engaging with and Delivering Keele Programmes through Educational Partnerships

1.4.1 In actively expanding its global connections through a range of diverse and meaningful educational and commercial partnerships, capitalising on the unique benefits of collaboration whilst maintaining its responsibilities as a UK degree awarding body and OfS registered provider, and its duty of care and contractual obligations to students, external stakeholders and partners, Keele is committed to pursuing the transformation of knowledge and understanding and bringing benefit to society, communities and individuals on a global scale through education and research that transcends national and social boundaries and values and celebrates the rights, responsibilities, dignity, health and wellbeing of individuals through a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

1.4.2 Recognising the inherent risks and challenges of navigating the complex and varied realities of legal and ideological divergences, cultural and social attitudes and beliefs of inter-cultural collaboration, any educational partnership proposal Keele pursues and actively engages with, should be tested against the principles below, which are embedded into formal procedures set out within this Code of Practice, and are aligned with the OfS Conditions of Registration and '[Regulatory Framework for Higher Education in England](#)', Universities UK '[Managing Risks in Internationalisation](#)' and '[Franchise Governance Framework](#)' publications and the QAA '[UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#)' and its associated principles, advice and guidance.

### 1.4.3 Educational Partnerships at Keele:

- Must consider the distinct risks associated with the partnership. A Risk assessment should be conducted and risk mitigation strategies implemented where necessary, proportionate to the level of risk and model of partnership. Where there is a direct impact on Keele staff and/or students, these risks, and their potential implications, should be appropriately disclosed to Keele staff and/or students impacted;
- Must ensure that the academic integrity of the University's awards are protected and that the University's reputation and the academic experience of its students are not compromised by the collaboration;
- Should be mutually beneficial, and, wherever possible, and within scope of the University's regulatory and policy framework, and its obligations as a UK awarding body, should aim to facilitate a distinctive contribution from each partner;
- Must be delivered in accordance with the University's regulatory and policy framework, with any exceptions explicitly agreed between the University and partner and continuously reviewed;
- Must respect the principles of academic integrity and freedom of expression as set out in the University's [Freedom of Expression Code of Practice](#), which must remain protected elements of any collaboration;
- Must respect the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion as set out in Keele's [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Objectives](#) and [Inclusive Education Framework](#);
- Must be able to demonstrate student safeguarding, safety and wellbeing can be appropriately supported within the context of the partner's and partnership's cultural

environment, ensuring the broad alignment to the University's own safeguarding, safety and wellbeing principles and policies and those set by the OfS;

- Should be delivered in line with University expectations regarding good practice in learning, teaching and research, whilst recognising the importance of facilitating inter-cultural practices in collaboration, fostering robust, safe and explorative opportunities for divergent and/or innovative practices to be delivered, provided Keele staff and student safety is not jeopardised and there are no risks of the University contravening any relevant internal or external regulatory frameworks and laws;
- Must be delivered in accordance with Keele IT, Information Security and Cyber Security policies and processes throughout the partnership. Whilst there will be no default assumption of access to systems or information; through the collaborative building of robust operational frameworks, the University will ensure the necessary users and partners with a valid requirement have access to University data and/or networks, with safety protocols such as two-step identity verification in place wherever possible. Particular attention will be applied to any requests to access to research with potential economic value, politically and commercially sensitive material, sensitive enterprise data or data on Keele staff and students. The University will reserve the right to audit relevant partner systems and processes related to and of impact to Keele;
- Must initially be and remain consistent with the [University Strategic Plan](#) and the relevant University and Faculty strategies for international recruitment and partnership development, where applicable;
- Will be delivered with high quality partners who have demonstrable academic standards, an academic strategy which is complementary to Keele's, good academic reputation, a suitable organisational infrastructure, the necessary financial and legal standing and security for the duration of the partnership's intended term;
- Are subject to the University's quality management activities, including those set out in this Code of Practice;
- Will offer an equitable student experience for all students, regardless of the location of delivery;
- Will deliver the University's provision in English as the primary language of instruction and assessment, except in exceptional circumstances in line with those set out in this Code of Practice and in such cases, will comply with the University's [Delivery and Assessment in Another Language Framework](#);<sup>1</sup>
- Will be entered into at an institutional (rather than Faculty, School or Directorate) level, approved through established governance structures, with all contractual documents signed by designated University signatories as set out in the University's Schedule of Delegation;
- Will provide institutional level benefits that can be clearly demonstrated and/or articulated;

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<sup>1</sup> Delivery in a language other than English will be approved only in exceptional circumstances, for which there is a clear academic and strategic rationale, with robust frameworks established for maintaining academic quality and standards as per the University's Delivery and Assessment in Another Language Framework.

- Must be initially and remain financially viable and sustainable, fully costed and priced accordingly as set out in a Financial Business Case that will be reviewed at the appropriate stage, and regularly thereafter;
- Must be entered into on the expectation that, where a Keele degree is awarded, as part of a sole or Joint and/or Dual Award arrangement, whether delivered by Keele or a partner, students undertake at least the minimum number of Keele credits at the level of the award as set out in the University's [Regulation E1: The University Qualifications Framework](#). For undergraduate provision this will normally mean 120 Keele credits, including at least 90 credits from their final year which includes the independent study element, such as the dissertation. For postgraduate provision, this will normally mean at least 90 Keele credits including the independent study element. Students must meet the overall credit volume requirements for the award. For any provision Keele accredits from a partner, the University must assure itself of the academic standards of this provision, have suitable oversight of assessment and adequate assurance that the provision is set at the right academic level, in line with the UK Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) and Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ);
- Must be entered into on the expectation that the degree algorithm determining the basis on which a Keele degree is classified will be in line with the University's [Regulation D2: Progression and Classification Rules](#), and normally be based on Keele module credit only;
- Must be developed and delivered with consideration of the University's Sustainability agenda in mind, in line with the [University's Sustainability Principles and Policies](#) and the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#);
- Must remain compliant with any external UK Government and UK legislative requirements including those set out within the National Security Act and Foreign Influence Registration Scheme, and the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act.

## 1.5 English Language Requirements in Educational Partnerships

1.5.1 In addition to the above principles, all students entering onto a programme through an educational partnership that leads to a Keele award will typically be expected to meet the same minimum English language requirements as students entering the same programme, or a broadly similar programme, at Keele. This can be evidenced through an English Language assessment approved by Keele. Language requirements will typically be recommended by the Global Student Recruitment and Admissions Directorate during the approval of a new educational partnership, and at appropriate review points, in consultation with Keele's Language Centre. As part of this process, any new or alternative means of assessment must be reviewed by the Language Centre, which must have confidence that the new or alternative means of assessment will provide the necessary evaluation of student's ability to fully engage with the programme in English.

1.5.2 All academic English language support embedded into a programme delivered through an educational partnership must be scrutinised and approved by Keele's Language Centre, ensuring it provides a suitable level of support. If the partner's current provision does not align to the University's, the Keele Language Centre will consider using its own modules, working closely with

the relevant programme and professional services teams at Keele and the partner. Where Keele Language Centre English for Academic Purposes modules are required to be embedded in a programme, this must first be discussed with the Head of the Language Centre and the English Language Programme Director so that modules appropriate to the programme are selected for inclusion into the programme's structure.

## **1.6 Delivery and Assessment in Another Language**

1.6.1 Although it is normally expected the University's provision and/or awards are delivered and assessed in English, there may be sound strategic and academic rationale for the University's provision to be delivered and assessed in another language, usually that local to the educational partner. Delivery and assessment of Keele's provision through an educational partnership in a language other than English will be explored from the outset with a prospective partner and considered through any new partnership proposal under the procedures set out in this Code of Practice and must meet the expectations set out in the University's [Delivery and Assessment in Another Language Framework](#).

## 2. POLICY

### 2.1 Approval of Educational Partnerships

#### a) Overview of Partner and Partnership Approval

2.1.1 Approval arrangements for new educational partnerships will vary dependent on the nature of the collaboration and are considered as part of a risk-based approach<sup>2</sup>. The following section sets out the procedures for new partnership approval, and the considerations to be made when approving new educational partnerships, on the basis of the partnership models set out in section 1.3 of this Code of Practice. Specific approval procedures for certain models of partnership are set out separately throughout. In addition to partnership approval, some new educational partnerships may also require programme approval or modification, the procedures for which are set out within the University's [Programme Approval and Programme Modification Intranet pages](#).

The following partnership arrangements, as defined in section 1.3 of this Code of Practice, will normally be submitted to the following University governance body for approval:

Type of Arrangement	Governance Body Approval
Co-Delivery	Partner/Partnership approval by UEC
Dual Award	Partner/Partnership approval by UEC
Dual PhD	Partner/Partnership approval by UEC
Franchise	Partner/Partnership approval by UEC
Joint Award/Programme	Partner/Partnership approval by UEC
Joint PhD	Partner/Partnership approval by UEC
Offsite Delivery/Flying Faculty	Partner/Partnership approval by UEC
Programme Endorsement	Partner/Partnership approval by FEG
Split Site PhDs	Partner/Partnership approval by UDAC
Validation	Partner/Partnership approval by UEC

#### b) Initial Exploration and Investigation

2.1.2 Initial enquiries as to the potential for developing a new educational partnership (excluding PGR partnerships – please refer to section 2d) and 2e)) may be generated either through acquisition by a member of Keele's senior leadership team, an approach by a prospective partner or through acquisition by a Keele School, Faculty or Professional Service. In each case, the initial proposal, where aligned to an overseas partner and partnership (excluding PGR partnerships – please refer to section 2d) and 2e)), should be brought to the attention of the International Partnerships Development Team based within the Global Student Recruitment, Partnerships and Access Team within the Global Student Recruitment and Admissions Directorate, who will advise on the initial viability of the proposal, consulting with the Educational Partnerships Team, who will advise on any regulatory, quality and standards considerations, as well as the potential approval route. The International Partnerships Development Team will work with the relevant University teams, including the Educational Partnerships Team, Keele School, Faculty and prospective partner to

<sup>2</sup> In some circumstances, where a proposal varies from the standard models of collaboration, the Educational Partnerships Team may agree a variation to the approval procedure. As such the final submission and documentation requirements may vary, the Educational Partnerships Team will advise on the approval requirements during the initial exploration and investigation of a proposal.

further explore the proposal before further resource is committed to developing it. This will normally involve a viability assessment drawing on market analysis, alignment to University strategic aims, indicative income and cost analysis and credibility of the prospective partner.

2.1.3 If the International Partnerships Development Team, Pro Vice-Chancellor International, Keele Faculty, School and Educational Partnerships Team agree there is scope to further explore a partnership and its development, usually following an endorsement of the viability assessment carried out by the International Partnerships Development Team, a proposal can then proceed to the next stage of partnership development and approval in accordance with the relevant approval route.

2.1.4 Initial partnership proposals aligned to a UK partner and partnership should be brought to the attention of the Educational Partnerships team who will coordinate a similar procedure, working with the relevant Faculty and School, with the proposal circulated to members of the UK Partnerships Working Group, and where necessary, the Strategic Education Partnerships Group to consider the opportunity before the proposal can proceed to the next stage of partnership approval.

2.1.5 It may be necessary to establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at this stage between the University and the proposed partner/s. The MoU is a non-legally binding statement of intent which indicates that the University and the proposed partner/s are willing to explore ways of working together. The Educational Partnerships Team will provide the template for any MoU which must be formally signed by the designated University signatories. The MoU is not a legally binding agreement and a formal legally binding contract will, in most cases relating to the models of partnership defined in this Code of Practice, be required once the partnership has been approved by the University. In all cases in which an MoU is required, the Educational Partnerships Team will, in consultation with the Project Assurance Contracts Team based in the Research, Innovation and Engagement Directorate, coordinate or oversee their negotiation, drafting or reviewing MoUs before they are sent to a proposed partner and following any feedback, coordinating the approval and signatory process once a position has been agreed. In instances where an MoU is required, either before or following an initial viability assessment, the [Memorandum of Understanding Proposal Form](#) should be completed by the relevant School/Faculty and the International Partnerships Development Team and submitted to the Educational Partnerships Team to process.

### **c) The Partnership Proposal and Approval**

- New Partnership Proposal Development**

2.1.6 Following an initial viability assessment of any new partnership proposal undertaken by the International Partnerships Development Team, for any partnership classified as Collaborative Provision and that aligns to the partnership models set out in section 1.3 of this Code of Practice at undergraduate and postgraduate taught level, the [New Partnership Proposal Form](#) must be completed. This would usually be a collaborative exercise between the lead School/s, Faculty (usually led by the Faculty Deans of Internationalisation and Partnerships), International Partnerships Development Team and Educational Partnerships Team. Once completed, it will be ultimately submitted to the University Executive Committee (UEC) for approval.

2.1.7 The New Partnership Proposal Form is split into two phases with information requests tailored to each phase and RAG rated. Phase 1, the New Partnership Full Proposal, requires detailed exploration of a prospective new partnership. Information under Phase 1 should be obtained through detailed exploration of the partnership and the information gathered from the partner and through market analysis and is necessary for the University to make a robust decision on the approval of a new partnership before it proceeds to contractual negotiations and implementation. Phase 1 is normally accompanied by due diligence and a Risk Assessment on the prospective partner and partnership, and a full Financial Business Case will normally be required for partnership proposals classified as Collaborative Provision.

2.1.8 Phase 2 sets out the practical and operational considerations required to be thought through for a new partnership during its implementation, following University approval and prior to launch, and is designed to guide and inform the core considerations of partnership delivery and management normally set out within a partnership's operational framework.

2.1.9 During the development of Phase 1 of a new partnership proposal, it may be beneficial in some circumstances, for example large scale Collaborative Provision partnerships with cross-Faculty input, to establish a working group to meet regularly throughout the development of the proposal, overseeing the due diligence investigations, preparations for a partner approval visit (where applicable), the development of the Financial Business Case and the design, development, approval or modification of the programme/s (where applicable). The working group may continue in some capacity following Phase 1 approval of the partnership, overseeing the coordination of Phase 2 implementation of the partnership. Membership of such working groups will be determined based on the nature of the proposal and may fluctuate dependant on the agenda but might normally include; the relevant Executive Dean/s or nominee (as chair), relevant Head of School/s, Head of Faculty Operations, Dean of Internationalisation and Partnerships, members of the wider senior leadership team and a member of the International Partnerships Development Team and Educational Partnerships Team.

2.1.10 Prior to undertaking Phase 1 of a new partnership proposal, it may be necessary to put in place a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) or Confidentiality Agreement to prevent both the University and proposed partner from breaching confidentiality with regards to commercially sensitive information exchanged as part of the negotiations. Advice can be provided by the Project Assurance Contracts Team and/or Legal, Governance and Compliance who have responsibility for overseeing the preparation and sign-off of such agreements.

**Please see Sections 2.1 d) and 2.1 e) for the approval requirements of Split-Site PhD, Joint and Dual PhD partnerships and 2.1 f) for the approval requirements of Programme Endorsement Services partnerships.**

- **University Consultation**

2.1.11 During the development of Phase 1 of the New Partnership Proposal Form, it may be necessary to consult with wider University central Professional Services to fully consider the implications and potential resource requirements of a proposed partnership. The Educational Partnerships Team will advise and, in most cases, lead on the consultation process with relevant central Professional Services, alongside the International Partnerships Development Team. The

following central Professional Services may be consulted through the development of educational partnership proposals:

- **Estates and Campus Services:** to consider the impact (where relevant) on facilities or resources on the University's campus;
- **Finance Directorate:** to ensure that all relevant taxation, fee transfer and costing considerations are taken into account in the development of the Financial Business Case and operation of the partnership;
- **Global Opportunities Team:** to consider opportunities for student mobility, or short course/summer school arrangements.
- **Global Student Recruitment and Admissions:** to confirm the process for recruiting international students through the partnership where applicable and to provide context on recruiting from particular international markets. To agree the entry requirements of the associated programme/s and to agree the admissions processes for the partnership, including partnership arrangements where students transfer to the University.
- **Human Resources:** to consider any staffing implications, particularly in models of collaboration that require staff recruitment overseas, or flying faculty;
- **Immigration Compliance and Advice Team:** to advise on any immigration/visa requirements;
- **Information and Digital Services:** to advise on access to University systems, to assess the impact on the University's digital infrastructure and any developments to the University's digital services required as part of the proposal and consider impact to software licensing where relevant;
- **Keele Institute for Innovation in Teaching Excellence:** to explore new programme design (where applicable), any potential support required to deliver a Keele award digitally and where required, professional training and development needs of any staff external to Keele involved in the delivery of a Keele award;
- **Keele Language Centre:** to advise on the language of delivery and assessment and what Keele language provision may need to be delivered, ensure that consideration is given to English language skills of prospective students and entry criteria as well as any ongoing support needs of students following entry;
- **Keele Students' Union (KeeleSU) and Keele Postgraduate Association (KPA):** to ensure that consideration is given to whether and how students might be able to access services and facilities provided by the KeeleSU and KPA and to consider student voice, engagement and feedback frameworks for the partnership;
- **Library:** to consider access to online learning resources, licensing implications and to assess any associated licensing costs;
- **Project Assurance Contracts Team and/or Legal, Governance and Compliance:** to consider the legal jurisdiction and framework in which the partnership will operate, data sharing requirements and any legal costs associated with the proposal;
- **Student Records and Examinations:** to consider any implications to programme infrastructure within the Student Record Management System and the status of students, ensuring that data transfer arrangements are put in place for student records and that suitable processes can be established to manage the operational delivery of the programme/s and partnership from a record management perspective;

- **Student Services:** to ensure that any student support requirements have been considered, particularly in relation to student safeguarding, safety and wellbeing, accommodation arrangements (where applicable) are appropriately planned, career and employment opportunities and support (where applicable) and academic skills support for students have been fully considered;
- **Quality Assurance Team:** to consider requirements for programme modification or new programme design, development and approval (where applicable) and to advise on credit frameworks, external examining and any other matters relating to quality assurance and standards.

- **The Financial Business Case**

2.1.12 A full Financial Business Case is required for all partnerships classified as Collaborative Provision taken through Phase 1 of the New Partnership Proposal Form. The Financial Business Case is submitted alongside the New Partnership Proposal Form and Risk Assessment to UEC for final approval. The Financial Business Case provides a detailed cost and income analysis as to the financial viability of the partnership proposal, incorporating staffing pay costs within the Faculty and, where necessary, central Professional Services, required to deliver and support the partnership, and any non-pay costs including possible legal fees, travel costs and a partner approval visit (where applicable). The Financial Business Case will normally be developed according to a set template by the Head of Faculty Operations or in cases where more than one Faculty is involved, jointly by Heads of Faculty Operations concerned with the proposal, with input from the Keele Finance Directorate.

- **Due Diligence and Risk Assessment**

2.1.13 Due diligence on prospective educational partners and partnerships, particularly those classified as Collaborative Provision, is essential to aid the University in determining any risks associated with the proposed partner and/or partnership and in understanding the reputation, financial position, legal standing, organisational structure and academic experience of a prospective partner and the environment in which it operates. Due diligence also seeks to understand possible student success metrics at the partner, for example student attainment, retention, progression and achievement, and the success of graduates in entering graduate level employment. Whilst it is recognised this data may not always be available, the University would expect to build a sufficient view of a prospective partner's quality and standards and its record with regards to student achievement, contextualised where possible to the University's own expectations and those placed on it through external regulation.

2.1.14 The due diligence procedure is coordinated centrally by the Educational Partnerships Team which will undertake desk-based research, working with the prospective partner to collate the responses and documentation required to conduct a thorough assessment of the prospective partner, according to the relevant [Due Diligence Questionnaire](#) and in accordance with the University's [Due Diligence Guidance](#), and seek external specialist advice where necessary. A shorter, reduced Due Diligence Questionnaire will be used for some proposals, for example those involving UK higher education institutions with degree awarding powers and proposals modelled on Programme Endorsement Services.

2.1.15 As part of the due diligence procedure, references for the proposed partner may be sought from their existing UK University partners where appropriate. The information provided by the prospective partner through its due diligence submission will be distributed to relevant central Professional Services teams within the University by the Educational Partnerships Team for review where required.

2.1.16 Following the review of the prospective partner's due diligence submission, and any necessary consultation, the Educational Partnerships Team will develop a formal Risk Assessment in line with the University's [Risk Management Policy](#), which will set out any established risks and proposed mitigations, with each risk assigned a RAG rated risk score. Risk Assessments will be discussed with Heads of School, Heads of Faculty Operations, Deans of Internationalisation and Partnerships and central Professional Services from the outset to ensure all risks are accurately captured and fully understood by relevant University stakeholders. Once finalised, the Risk Assessment will be submitted to UEC alongside Phase 1 of the New Partnership Proposal Form and continue to be updated by the Educational Partnerships Team and monitored throughout the term of a partnership by the Educational Partnerships Committee (EPC), with EPC reporting into the University's central Audit and Risk Committee. Where a substantial number of risks are determined without suitable mitigation strategies, external legal and/or financial advice may be sought, and this may then require further consideration at UEC before a decision on the approval of a new partnership is made.

2.1.17 Unless the activities under the partnership proposal are based in the UK, external legal and taxation advice may be sought to ensure that the proposal does not conflict with any in-country regulation or legislation. The cost of such advice should be included in the Financial Business Case.

- **Partner Approval Visit**

2.1.18 For large scale, high-risk educational partnership proposals classified as Collaborative Provision and strategic partnerships at an institutional level, a partner approval visit may be required, undertaken either physically through travel to the prospective partner, or via an online event, during the development of the Phase 1 New Partnership Proposal and prior to final UEC approval. It will normally be expected designated Keele staff regularly visit an approved partner during each academic year and therefore initial formal partner approval visits may be considered unnecessary. Informed through outcomes of due diligence on the prospective partner and the Risk Assessment, the Educational Partnerships Team and Pro Vice-Chancellor International, in consultation with the relevant Faculty Executive Dean/s, will jointly determine whether a partner approval visit is necessary and if so, whether this is undertaken through a physical visit or via an online event.

2.1.19 Regardless of whether the visit is undertaken physically or digitally, a Keele delegation or panel will be appointed by the Pro Vice-Chancellor International on the recommendation of the Educational Partnerships Team. The associated costs of a physical visit should be recorded in the Financial Business Case. Whilst it would normally be expected that a partnership approval visit takes place prior to the final submission of a proposal to UEC, thus allowing findings of the visit to be reflected in the proposal, in some exceptional circumstances a visit may be postponed until after UEC has considered a partnership proposal. In such circumstances, it would normally be expected that UEC provides provisional approval, pending the findings of an approval visit. Regardless as to

whether a partner approval visit takes place, thorough due diligence must be undertaken, and a Risk Assessment generated, prior to UEC considering Phase 1 of the New Partnership Proposal for approval.

2.1.20 Where a partner approval visit is deemed necessary, the delegation or panel from the University will provide an independent view whether the proposed partner can provide an appropriate learning environment, a high standard of teaching and student support and a satisfactory level of physical resources for the delivery of the Keele award(s). The delegation or panel will not normally be required to comment in detail on programme-specific resources as this information will be provided by the Keele School and Faculty, based on exploratory discussions with the prospective partner and will be explored further through the New Partnership Proposal Form. Members of the delegation or panel should include staff who are able to provide expertise in relation to academic, quality assurance and/or international collaboration (where appropriate). The number of staff conducting a visit or participating as part of a digital panel will depend upon the complexity of the proposed arrangement and the level of risk and will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Pro Vice-Chancellor International and Educational Partnerships Team, although there will normally be at least three participating members.

2.1.21 The partner approval visit will always include a tour of all relevant facilities at the proposed partner and meetings with the senior leadership team, academic and professional services staff and with students of the proposed partner institution. Where a visit is held digitally, the prospective partner will be asked to arrange a digital tour of its facilities. A schedule and agenda will be provided for the proposed partner in advance of the visit, and every effort will be made to draw up a suitable visit programme to provide the necessary opportunity, in partnership, to consider the proposed arrangements.

2.1.22 The delegation or panel will produce a written summary or full written report setting out the findings of the visit which may contain recommendations and conditions for further work to be undertaken before final UEC approval of the proposed partnership is considered.

2.1.23 It is the responsibility of the established joint governance structures under a partnership's operational framework, once a partnership has been approved, to monitor whether there are any significant changes to the partner's situation, status, or mode of operation. Where, following the approval of a proposal by UEC, it comes to the attention of the University that the partner's situation has changed significantly in ways which may affect the circumstances in which the University's provision is offered, this must be considered through the joint governance structures and where necessary, considered by UEC, or escalated through the Cause for Concern procedure set out in Section 2.3 j) of this Code.

- **Governance Body Submission - Partnership Approval**

2.1.24 The information requirements set out within the New Partnership Proposal Form are designed to provide the University with the necessary understanding of the nature of the proposal, the risks associated with it, the rationale for pursuing it and resource attributed to its delivery and ongoing management. UEC approval is normally required for partnerships classified as Collaborative Provision, and broader strategic institutional partnerships, however, where a deviation to this approval route may be deemed necessary, i.e. a proposal of sufficient scale and risk that may require

approval by University Senate and/or University Council, this will be considered by UEC on advice from Legal, Governance and Compliance, the Vice-Chancellors Office and Educational Partnerships Team.

2.1.25 All proposals for new educational partnerships and those classified as Collaborative Provision should be considered and usually endorsed by the relevant Faculty Executive Group/s and Pro Vice-Chancellor International prior to submission for approval and must be submitted for approval by the Educational Partnerships Team. UEC will consider the information about the prospective partner and the proposed model of collaboration in a strategic context and assess the proposal on its opportunities and risks. If UEC is of the view that the proposal is in line with the University's Strategic Plan, educational and research portfolio and internationalisation ambitions, wider strategic plans for student recruitment, international growth and, based on the available information, likely to be financially viable, with sufficient risk mitigation in place, a partnership proposal may be approved. Where UEC require further information to be gathered or elements of a proposal to be clarified, a proposal may be re-submitted at a later stage once the requirements have been met.

2.1.26 Documentary requirements for the final submission of new partnership proposals include the following:

- a) New Partnership Proposal Form (Phase 1 completed);
- b) Financial Business Case;
- c) Risk Assessment;
- d) Partner Approval Visit Report (where applicable).

#### **d) Split Site PhD Approval**

2.1.27 For Split Site PhD partnerships, consultation should take place with relevant University stakeholders as set out in the PGR Partnerships Framework, with the relevant Faculty's PGR Director, the Keele Doctoral Academy (KDA) and Educational Partnerships Team first consulted regarding any new potential proposals. If it is confirmed that there is scope to develop a formal proposal for a Split Site PhD arrangement, the Faculty's Executive Dean, Dean of Research, Dean of Internationalisation and Partnerships and the University's Pro Vice-Chancellor International and Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation should be consulted to ensure a proposal is endorsed in principle. There may also be circumstances in which the University's Pro Vice-Chancellor International and Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation bring forward new Split Site PhD partnership opportunities for consideration, in such circumstances, these partnerships will be considered in consultation with the KDA and Educational Partnerships Team, as well as the Faculty's Executive Dean, Dean of Research, Dean of Internationalisation and Partnerships and Faculty PGR Director.

2.1.28 Once endorsed in principle, the [Split Site PhD Proposal Form](#) should be completed collaboratively between the Faculty or lead School, KDA and Educational Partnerships Team, providing information on the anticipated number of postgraduate researchers (PGRs), funding streams and proposed tuition fees, resource requirements, PGR support arrangements, proposed study pattern, available research facilities and availability and expertise of supervisory staff. The proposal should also include an outline of the strategic value to the University and the University's research agenda. Proposals will need to demonstrate that there is strong existing expertise in both the University and proposed partner to ensure students can be supported at each stage of their research. Proposals will not normally be considered unless it can be demonstrated that sufficient

funding is in place to support the arrangement. The KDA and Educational Partnerships Team will advise on the most appropriate model for collaboration, based on what the School and/or Faculty aim to achieve through partnership. The main principle of a Split Site PhD partnership is that there is a reliance on the partner for the PGR to complete their research, for example in the form of supervision or facilities, with PGRs spending a significant proportion of their time at the partner.

2.1.29 The Split Site PhD Proposal Form includes a Financial Business Case that should be completed by the Faculty or lead School, setting out clearly how the Split Site PhD arrangement is funded, whether fee waivers might apply, and if so, how this would impact on the costs of supporting PGRs, paying for supervision, supplying resources, facilities and support services, institutional visits etc, providing a clear indication of where the wavered fee would be supplemented. The fees to Keele will need to be set at a level to ensure that the University can meet its obligations as the awarding body. Tuition fees due to Keele may be arranged flexibly for each partnership and will be regulated through a legal agreement between the University and partner/s, normally where not directly paid to Keele by PGRs.

2.1.30 The Split Site PhD Proposal Form once complete should then be submitted by the Faculty or lead School to the relevant Faculty PGR Committee (in cases in which multiple Faculties are involved, the Split Site PhD Proposal Form should be submitted to all relevant Faculty PGR Committees). The Faculty PGR Committee should consider the proposal and provide constructive feedback on any element of the proposal for further consideration prior to final submission for approval. Following Faculty PGR Committee consideration, and subject to any feedback, the Split Site PhD Proposal Form should then be submitted to the University Doctoral Academy Committee (UDAC) for final approval. UDAC will consider the information about the prospective partner and the proposed collaboration in a strategic context and assess the proposal on its opportunities and risks. UDAC will approve the proposal if it is in line with the [University's Strategic Plan](#) and wider research agenda and, based on the available information, likely to be financially viable.

### **e) Joint and Dual PhD Award Approval**

2.1.31 For Joint and Dual PhD partnerships, consultation should take place with relevant University stakeholders as set out in the PGR Partnerships Framework, with the relevant Faculty's PGR Director, the Keele Doctoral Academy (KDA) and Educational Partnerships Team first consulted regarding any new potential proposals. If it is confirmed that there is scope to develop a formal proposal for either a Joint or Dual PhD arrangement, the Faculty's Executive Dean, Dean of Research, Dean of Internationalisation and Partnerships and University's Pro Vice-Chancellor International and Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation should be consulted to ensure a proposal is endorsed in principle. There may also be circumstances in which the University's Pro Vice-Chancellor International and Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation bring forward new Joint and Dual PhD partnerships for consideration, in such circumstances, these partnerships will be considered in consultation with the KDA and Educational Partnerships Team, as well as the Faculty's Executive Dean, Dean of Research, Dean of Internationalisation and Partnerships and Faculty PGR Director.

2.1.32 Once scope to further develop a formal proposal has been confirmed, the [Joint & Dual PhD Proposal Form](#) should be completed collaboratively between the Faculty or lead School, KDA and Educational Partnerships Team, setting out in detail the proposal, regulatory and supervisory arrangements and outline the strategic value to the University and to the University's research

agenda. In addition, due diligence should normally be carried out on the prospective partner with outcomes fed into the Joint & Dual PhD Proposal Form. Proposals will need to demonstrate that there is strong existing expertise in both institutions to ensure the PGRs can be supported at each stage of their research. Proposals will not normally be considered unless it can be demonstrated that there is sufficient funding in place to support the arrangement, or that sufficient PGR numbers are achievable to make the arrangement financially viable and secure.

2.1.33 It may be beneficial in some circumstances, for example large scale partnerships with cross-Faculty input, to establish a working group to oversee the development of the partnership proposal, including the mapping and (where relevant) creation of a joint regulatory framework in which PGRs will be expected to conduct their research and awards be issued. Membership of such working groups will be determined based on the nature of the proposal and may fluctuate dependant on the agenda, but might normally include; the Faculty Executive Dean or Dean of Research or nominee (as chair), Head of relevant School(s), Dean of Internationalisation and Partnerships, Faculty PGR Director, KDA Director or nominee, members of the wider senior leadership team and a member of the Educational Partnerships Team.

2.1.34 The Joint & Dual PhD Proposal Form once complete should then be submitted by the Faculty or lead School to the relevant Faculty PGR Committee (in cases in which multiple Faculties are involved, the Joint & Dual PhD Proposal Form should be submitted to all relevant Faculty PGR Committees). The Faculty PGR Committee should consider the proposal and provide constructive feedback on any element of the proposal for further consideration prior to submission to the University Doctoral Academy Committee (UDAC). Following Faculty PGR Committee consideration, and subject to any feedback, the Joint & Dual PhD Proposal Form should then be submitted to UDAC which will consider the information about the prospective partner and the proposed collaboration in a strategic context and assess the proposal on its opportunities and risks, and as with Faculty PGR Committee, provide constructive feedback to be taken into consideration prior to final submission for approval.

2.1.36 Following consideration of the Joint & Dual PhD Proposal Form at both Faculty PGR Committee and UDAC, the Joint & Dual PhD Proposal Form should be submitted to UEC for final approval. Proposals will be presented to UEC by the Faculty Executive Dean (or their nominee), Pro Vice-Chancellor International and Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation. UEC will consider the information about the prospective partner and the proposed collaboration in a strategic and business context and assess the proposal on its opportunities and risks. UEC will approve the proposal if it is in line with the [University's Strategic Plan](#) and wider research agenda and, based on the available information, likely to be financially viable.

2.1.37 Following approval by UEC, a legal agreement will be developed, coordinated by the KDA and Educational Partnerships Team in consultation with and supported by the relevant Faculty, and in liaison with the Project Assurance Contracts Team/ Legal, Governance and Compliance, or where necessary an external legal firm.

**For further information on the models of PGR partnerships and their requirements, please refer to the PGR Partnerships Framework attached as an appendix to this Code of Practice (Appendix 1).**

#### **f) Programme Endorsement Services Approval**

2.1.38 Initial enquiries as to the potential for endorsing an element of an external organisation's provision may be generated predominantly either through an approach by a prospective external organisation or through acquisition by a Keele School, Faculty or Professional Service. Where the endorsement service relates to an external organisation's programme or academic provision, any approach by an external organisation should be referred to the relevant Keele School, normally the Head of School, alongside the Dean of Education and where an external organisation is based overseas, the Dean of Internationalisation and Partnerships. The Keele School, in consultation with the Dean of Education (and Dean of Internationalisation and Partnerships where an external organisation is based overseas) will liaise with the organisation to explore more thoroughly the organisation's aims. Where an approach by an external organisation relates to the endorsement of a particular service, or the organisation itself, this will be considered by the University's Strategic Communications and Brand Directorate and the relevant Professional Service the proposed endorsed service best aligns to.

2.1.39 The following approval procedure refers to the endorsement of an external organisation's programme and academic provision under either a Programme Endorsement or Quality Assured Endorsement Service. Upon exploration of an external organisation's proposal, the relevant Keele School will consult with the Educational Partnerships Team who will consider whether due diligence on the external organisation may be required. In instances where due diligence is required, the Educational Partnerships Team will ask the external organisation to complete an abbreviated version of the [Due Diligence Questionnaire](#) as determined by the Educational Partnerships Team, which will then assess the external organisation's due diligence responses and where required, evidence, to determine any inherent risks in the endorsement of an external organisation's provision and the legal, financial and reputational standing of the external organisation.

2.1.40 On the basis of a successful due diligence assessment (where relevant), the Educational Partnerships Team will confirm with the School they may proceed to the next stage of approval. The School will be required to review the external organisation's provision, completing the Keele [Programme Endorsement Services Review Form](#), working with the Faculty's Dean of Education and Head of Faculty Operations, where required, to determine any financial arrangements between the University and external organisation, and consult with the University's Quality Assurance Team with regards to any arrangements modelled on a Quality Assured Endorsement Service. Once complete, the Programme Endorsement Services Review Form should be submitted to the relevant Faculty Education Committee (FEC) for initial review. FEC will review the Programme Endorsement Services Review Form to ensure that the provision to be endorsed by the University meets expected quality and standards, in line with the University's own provision. The Faculty Education Committee may require further information or action to be undertaken by the external organisation prior to granting approval of the endorsement service, for which the School and external organisation must comply with.

2.1.41 Following successful review of the Programme Endorsement Services Review Form by FEC, it should be submitted to the Faculty Executive Group (FEG) for final approval of the proposed endorsement service, with consideration of any financial arrangement proposed (i.e. where the external organisation may pay the University for the endorsement service) undertaken through FEG. In instances where a Programme Endorsement Service impacts multiple Schools and Faculties, each

Faculty FEC and FEG will consider the Programme Endorsement Services Review Form, however, and particularly where there is a significant proposed financial arrangement, the Programme Endorsement Services Review Form may be considered at UEC for final approval. The Educational Partnerships Team will advise on the approval route.

2.1.42 Once approved, the University will enter into a legal agreement with the partner organisation setting out the terms for the use of the University's Intellectual Property including its trademarks and brand. The Educational Partnerships Team, in coordinating the development and negotiation of the legal agreement, will work in consultation with the Project Assurance Contracts Team, using a standard template, contextualised as required to reflect the specific endorsement service, and setting out instruction on the University Intellectual Property that may be used and any additional requirements as a condition of use, which may include specific places in which the relevant Intellectual Property may be displayed and used by the partner organisation, a requirement to display a disclaimer, or any other requirement dependant on the nature of the endorsement, organisation, and/or any risks identified through the due diligence and/or approval procedure.

2.1.43 Once the legal agreement is signed and fully executed, the Educational Partnerships Team will inform the Strategic Communications and Brand Directorate who will issue to the partner organisation the Intellectual Property the partner organisation has been approved to use. The Educational Partnerships Team will carry out annual checks to ensure the University's Intellectual Property is being used in accordance with the legal agreement.

### **g) Programme Approval and Modification**

2.1.44 Where the new partnership involves a new taught programme, either developed by Keele or by the partner or jointly by both, the new programme will undergo a programme approval procedure based on Keele's internal programme approval procedures. Equally, if the programme is an existing programme previously developed solely by the partner, the programme will undergo programme approval based on Keele's programme approval procedures. Programme approval will be synchronised with partner approval wherever possible, however, in cases where this is not possible, a programme must be approved by the University prior to its launch. New programmes offered in collaboration with a partner through a model classified as Collaborative Provision will always require approval in accordance with the procedures set out on the University's [Programme Approval and Programme Modification Intranet pages](#) and in accordance with the University's [Quality Framework Process Guidance](#).

2.1.45 Where a potential partner has developed a programme, and that programme is intended to carry a professional award or license to practise, the University must either satisfy itself that the partner has obtained the necessary Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) accreditation or work with the partner organisation to secure PSRB approval. Equally, where an existing Keele programme which is recognised or accredited by a PSRB is franchised or delivered away from the University as part of a collaboration with a partner, i.e. through a model of Collaborative Provision, it has to be established prior to final approval by UEC whether the recognition or accreditation will be extended to the programme and if any action is required to meet PSRB requirements. Costs associated with this activity will be included in the Financial Business Case and any associated risks and proposed mitigations set out in the Risk Assessment where relevant.

2.1.46 In some cases, it may be necessary to modify an existing programme, rather than approve a new programme. In this instance, modification will normally be processed through the University's programme modification procedures, set out on the University's [Programme Approval and Programme Modification Intranet pages](#) and in accordance with the University's Framework for Quality Monitoring, Enhancement and Approval of Academic Provision. The Educational Partnerships Team, in consultation with the University's Quality Assurance Team, will advise on the appropriate route during the development of a new partnership proposal.

## 2.2 Management of Educational Partnerships

### a) Legal Agreements

2.2.1 Once University approval has been granted for a new educational partnership, the University and the partner can then enter into a legally-binding contract, usually a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA), which should be signed by the University's designated signatory in line with the University's [Schedule of Delegation](#) and [Contract Approval and Signature Processes](#).

2.2.2 The legal agreement is a legally binding document which (i) sets out the detailed arrangements for the partnership and obligations on the parties entering into the partnership, ii) sets out arrangements for the delivery of the programme/s (usually linked through the Operational Handbook and a programme's Programme Specification), (iii) ensures that the University is in a position to comply with its regulatory obligations and (iv) manages the legal aspects of the partnership, including the financial conditions and other assumptions underlying the Financial Business Case for the partnership as well as compliance with any external regulatory requirements. For Split Site PhDs and Joint and Dual PhD partnerships, each arrangement will be regulated by legal agreements between Keele and the partner/s to ensure that for each individual postgraduate researcher (PGR), appropriate, robust, reliable and high-quality arrangements are in place for the duration of their research degree. These arrangements will be communicated to PGRs via an offer letter based on the content of the legal agreement between the University and the partner/s, which will be attached to the PGR's record.

2.2.3 The legal agreement must be agreed and signed before students are recruited and delivery of a programme through an educational partnership can commence. The negotiation of legal agreements for any model of partnership defined in this Code of Practice will be coordinated by the Educational Partnerships Team. For partnerships classified as Collaborative Provision, due to their complex nature, the legal agreement can take several months to negotiate. It is therefore essential that adequate time is permitted for the development and negotiation of the legal agreement following the approval of a partnership and prior to its launch.

2.2.4 The Educational Partnerships Team, in coordinating the development and negotiation of the legal agreement, will work in consultation with the Project Assurance Contracts Team and/or Legal, Governance and Compliance/an external legal organisation, the University's Directorate of Finance, the relevant Faculty and the University's Academic Registry (and for Split Site PhDs and Joint and Dual PhD partnerships, the Keele Doctoral Academy (KDA)). The legal agreement will, wherever possible, be based on a standard University template, which will be amended to reflect the individual partnership, be written in English, taking precedence with respect to any translated version of the legal agreement, and be governed by English Law. Any deviation to these expectations must be recorded as a risk within the Risk Assessment for the partnership, with suitable mitigations considered before the legal agreement is agreed and fully executed.

2.2.5 All University staff must ensure that they do not purport to establish, or act in a way which may be misunderstood as establishing a contractual relationship prior to the legal agreement being agreed and fully executed. If in any doubt, the words "subject to contract" should be included in any correspondence.

2.2.6 For Programme Endorsement Services, the University will enter into a legal agreement with the partner organisation setting out the terms for the use of the University's Intellectual Property including its trademarks and brand.

2.2.7 Upon approval of an endorsement service by the University, the Educational Partnerships Team, in coordinating the development and negotiation of the legal agreement, will work in consultation with the Project Assurance Contracts Team, using a standard template, contextualised as required to reflect the specific endorsement service, and setting out instruction on the University Intellectual Property that may be used and any additional requirements as a condition of use, which may include specific places in which the relevant Intellectual Property may be displayed and used by the partner organisation, a requirement to display a disclaimer, or any other requirement dependant on the nature of the endorsement, organisation, and/or any risks identified through any due diligence and/or the approval procedure.

2.2.8 The Educational Partnerships Team will carry out annual checks to ensure the University's Intellectual Property is being used in accordance with the legal agreement.

### **b) Implementation and Preparation for Delivery**

2.2.9 Following successful approval of a partnership and the signing of the legal agreement between the University and the partner/s, and dependant on the partnership arrangement, the partnership will move to an implementation phase. Implementation will normally involve the development of the operational framework for the partnership, establishing the operational and delivery requirements, programme modification or approval (where applicable and where it has not been possible to conduct this alongside partnership approval), the recruitment of teaching and where applicable, professional services staff, the development of marketing and student recruitment activities and any additional activities in relation to the management of the partnership and coordination of programme delivery.

2.2.10 Implementation is coordinated by the Educational Partnerships Team, working closely with the partner, Faculties and Schools and central Professional Services. Timescales for implementation are dependent on the complexity of the partnership arrangement, the country of operation, subject discipline and in-country approval requirements (where relevant). The Educational Partnerships Team will advise on suggested timescales for implementation from the outset when the new partnership proposal is developed.

**Please refer to Section 2.2 m) for the implementation expectations related to Split Site PhD arrangements and Section 2.2 n) for Joint and Dual award PhD arrangements.**

### **c) The Operational Handbook**

2.2.11 For most educational partnerships classified as Collaborative Provision or institutional partnerships of significant scale, an Operational Handbook will normally to be compiled by the Educational Partnerships Team with support from the leading Keele Faculty Operations Team, School, Faculty and central Professional Services. An Operational Handbook is developed for each partnership, is normally linked to the legal agreement, and represents the shared understanding by

the University and the partner of the mechanisms through which the collaboration will operate. The Operational Handbook will ensure that:

- appropriate systems and processes have been developed to manage the quality and standards of the arrangement and the student experience, and that these are in line with University expectations;
- the respective roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders are clear, appropriate and understood by both the University and the partner. This should include clear lines for reporting and feedback, communication with students and other stakeholders;
- there is a shared understanding of the regulatory and procedural framework governing the student journey;
- the minimum requirements for communication between the University and the partner are agreed and the purpose for that communication is clear within the context of managing the quality and standards of the arrangement.

2.2.12 The Educational Partnerships Team will liaise with the partner, the relevant Keele Faculty Operations Team, School, Faculty and central Professional Services to develop the Operational Handbook, which will normally be predicated on a standardised operational framework the University has developed for all educational partnership activities, in which common University processes and the application of common University regulations and policies are applied. The Operational Handbook will be updated annually by the Educational Partnerships Team, in consultation with the partner, Keele Faculty Operations Team, School and Faculty.

2.2.13 Occasionally, in liaison with a partner, a different format will be agreed in place of an Operational Handbook. The Educational Partnerships Team will advise where any deviation from the standard format is necessary and a suitable alternative.

2.2.14 Where there is more than one Faculty/School collaborating with (or proposing to collaborate with) the same partner, all Faculties/Schools involved should contribute to the development of a single Operational Handbook. Operational Handbooks are not normally required for Split Site PhD, Joint or Dual PhD or Programme Endorsement Services arrangements (or recruitment-based, student mobility and short course partnership arrangements) and are predominantly developed for partnerships modelled on a Validation, Franchise, Joint and Dual Award (at undergraduate and/or postgraduate taught level) and Co-Delivery arrangement.

#### **d) Governance Arrangements**

2.2.15 Within the University committee structure, the following governance bodies are allocated responsibility in relation to educational partnerships:

2.2.16 **University Executive Committee (UEC)**, is ultimately responsible for overseeing at a senior leadership level coordination of the University's academic, commercial and operational business and holds therefore a responsibility for granting the approval of educational partnerships classified as Collaborative Provision, considering in detail a proposal to make an assessment, based on the evidence and analysis provided within the partnership proposal as to the impact of the risks posed, as well as the broader suitability, financial viability and strategic fit of the prospective partner and

partnership. UEC is also responsible for approving the expansion of existing partnerships classified as Collaborative Provision.

**2.2.17 Educational Partnerships Committee (EPC)**, on behalf of the University's Education Committee, is responsible for coordinating and overseeing the academic quality and standards of all educational partnerships at undergraduate and postgraduate taught level, including student retention and achievement outcomes, overseeing identified and emerging risks through Risk Assessments for each partnership classified as Collaborative Provision, and acts as the main body for overseeing quality assurance and enhancement related activities for educational partnerships at undergraduate and postgraduate taught level in relation to the student experience.

**2.2.18 University Doctoral Academy Committee (UDAC)**, in a similar role to EPC, is responsible for coordinating and overseeing the academic quality and standards of all educational partnerships at postgraduate research level, overseeing identified and emerging risks through Risk Assessments for each PGR partnership classified as Collaborative Provision (where applicable) and acts as the main body for overseeing quality assurance and enhancement related activities for educational partnerships at postgraduate research level in relation to the PGR experience.

**2.2.19 Strategic Education Partnerships Group (SEPG)**, SEPG maintains responsibility as a sub-group of UEC for the effective coordination of institutional partnership activities of strategic significance to the University including those educational partnerships aligned to models set out in section 1.3 of this Code of Practice. In discharging its responsibilities two separate sub-groups coordinate the strategic focus and development of partnerships internationally and across the UK and report into SEPG. These sub-groups include:

- **International Partnerships Working Group** - acts as a forum for the coordination of targeted international partnership initiatives, education and/or recruitment, considering those at the embryonic stage and those ready to be proposed for development into business cases, actively steering the University's international recruitment and educational partnership exploration, to keystone international markets informed through market intelligence, whilst maintaining oversight of the pipeline, maturity of opportunities, the timescales for their approval and implementation.
- **UK Partnerships Working Group** - acts as a forum for the coordination, oversight, and further development of activities with UK college partners and other UK based activities linked to external partnerships relating to recruitment as well as educational based activities delivered through partnerships aligned to models set out in section 1.3 of this Code of Practice.

**2.2.20 Faculty Executive Groups (FEG)**, operate for each Keele Faculty, with responsibility for coordinating and overseeing the operation of the Faculty and its strategic objectives. For educational partnerships, FEG receives and approves partnership and programme review activities in relation to Programme Endorsement Services arrangements following Faculty Education Committee consideration. FEG may also consider educational partnership activities aligned to the Faculty, which for new and expansion educational partnership proposals the Faculty Executive Group should normally endorse. It is not a requirement for FEG to approve educational partnerships prior to their final approval at University level, however it is important an educational partnership proposal receives Faculty endorsement. FEG may, in addition to considering new or expansion partnership

proposals also maintain oversight of an educational partnership's performance financially and with regards to student recruitment and achievement and wider performance within the context of annual monitoring procedures set out in this Code of Practice.

2.2.21 **Faculty Education Committees (FEC)**, operate for each Keele Faculty, with responsibility for overseeing the education activities, programme enhancement and student experience delivered across the Faculty, in line with the University's broader educational aims. For educational partnerships, FEC receives and reviews partnership and programme review activities in relation to Programme Endorsement Services arrangements, Annual Partnership Reviews for educational partnerships aligned to the Faculty, and oversees the academic teach out plans following the termination or withdrawal of a partnership. FEC may be consulted on other elements of programme delivery and the student experience through educational partnerships and maintains a role in new programme and module design and approval according to the University's [Programme Approval and Programme Modification Intranet pages](#) and in accordance with the University's Framework for Quality Monitoring, Enhancement and Approval of Academic Provision.

2.2.22 For educational partnerships classified as Collaborative Provision, such as Franchise, Validation, Joint and Dual Award and Co-Delivery taught partnerships, the University will normally put in place the standard governance structure set out below. Modified arrangements based on this model may apply dependant on the scale and complexity of the partnership and any in-country requirements and will normally be set out in the legal agreement or Operational Handbook. There should however always be an appropriate and holistic governance structure in place enabling effective oversight of the partnership by the University and partner/s.

- **Joint Steering Committee**

2.2.23 A Joint Steering Committee (or equivalent) will be established for every educational partnership classified as Collaborative Provision modelled on a Franchise, Validation, Joint and/or Dual Award and Co-Delivery arrangement at an undergraduate and postgraduate taught level, providing a joint platform between the University and partner/s to oversee the partnership and coordinate its strategic direction, ensuring all programmes delivered under the partnership are managed effectively and in accordance with the legal agreement, Operational Handbook, relevant Programme Specification and general expectations of the University and partner/s and their respective in-country regulatory bodies.

2.2.24 The membership of the Joint Steering Committee will consist of members of the senior leadership team from Keele and the partner/s and will normally include the Dean of Internationalisation and Partnerships, the relevant Head(s) of School, the Link Tutor/Programme Director(s) and a member of the Educational Partnerships Team. Keele members of the Joint Steering Committee are responsible for escalating matters requiring further consideration within the University to EPC, which may determine further escalation routes to other governance bodies within the University as appropriate.

2.2.25 The Terms of Reference and membership of the Joint Steering Committee will be set out in the Operational Handbook for each partnership. Joint Steering Committees may also be established for other types of partnership, however the membership may vary from that set out above. Membership, Terms of Reference and frequency of meetings will be tailored to each specific

partnership based on the particular configuration of the partnership arrangement and any specific in-country requirements stipulated by the regulatory bodies of a particular partner.

- **Joint Board of Studies**

2.2.26 A Joint Board of Studies (or equivalent) will be established for every educational partnership classified as Collaborative Provision modelled on a Franchise, Validation, Joint and/or Dual Award and Co-Delivery arrangement at an undergraduate and postgraduate taught level. The Joint Board of Studies provides a joint forum to discuss academic and operational matters related to the programme/s delivered through the partnership and matters relating to the student experience, as well as consideration of student achievement, retention and progression data, actively considering actions to address trends in performance across a range of data sets with the aim of improving the academic quality and standards of the provision delivered through the partnership. The Joint Board of Studies will also consider operational matters in relation to those set out within the Operational Handbook for the partnership, escalating matters requiring further consideration to the Joint Steering Committee, which may determine further escalation is required to EPC or another University governance body.

2.2.27 The membership of the Joint Board of Studies will normally consist of the Link Tutor/Programme Director(s) (in the chair), a member of the Educational Partnerships Team, and other University staff involved in the coordination and delivery of the partnership, and the management and delivery of the programme/s as appropriate, such as Faculty Operations Teams, central Professional Services and other Keele academic staff. Membership from the partner/s will reflect that of Keele, as appropriate. The Terms of Reference and membership of the Joint Board of Studies will be set out in the Operational Handbook.

- **Board of Examiners**

2.2.28 A board of examiners will be established for all educational partnerships through which University credit or a University degree is awarded. A board of examiners will be established in line with the requirements of the University's [Regulation D3: Board of Examiners](#). A board of examiners, where award decisions at Level 6 or Level 7 are made will normally be chaired by either the Executive Dean of the Faculty or the relevant Dean of Internationalisation and Partnerships or Dean of Education. The board of examiners arrangements will be agreed prior to the commencement of the partnership and set out in the Operational Handbook. Partnerships classified as Collaborative Provision modelled on a Franchise, Validation, Joint and/or Dual Award and Co-Delivery arrangement at an undergraduate and postgraduate taught level, will normally include representation from the University and partner/s.

- **Student Staff Voice Committee**

2.2.29 For all educational partnerships classified as Collaborative Provision modelled on a Franchise, Validation, Joint and/or Dual Award and Co-Delivery arrangement at an undergraduate and postgraduate taught level, a forum will be established to facilitate opportunities for students and student representatives to meet with academic staff at Keele and the partner, including the relevant Programme Leader at the partner and the Keele Link Tutor/Programme Director. Such a forum may incorporate expectations from the partner but should at a minimum provide the same opportunities

for students to engage with their programme team and provide feedback on their educational and social experience as those provided through Student Staff Voice Committees (SSVC) at Keele. The SSVC (or equivalent) will normally meet at least twice per year, with the Keele Link Tutor/Programme Director an ex officio member who may attend any meeting or may request that a meeting is held. Formal mechanisms adopted to facilitate student engagement and feedback will be set out in the Operational Handbook for each partnership and be publicised to students, normally through a Student/Programme Handbook.

### **e) Student Voice, Engagement and Feedback**

2.2.30 The University values and places importance in facilitating opportunities for students to take an active role in their learning and shaping their educational and social experience. Regardless of the model of partnership, the following principles should be applied for all students associated to an educational partnership, regardless of where they study, in line with the University's [Student Voice Code of Practice](#):

- there is a formal means through which staff and students can regularly communicate on all issues affecting the student experience either through personal comment or via a representative;
- there are effective mechanisms for logging and responding to issues raised by students, reporting back on actions taken or reasons why no action is taken;
- the Student Union (or equivalent) at the partner and at Keele is properly informed of activities relating to student voice and representation and opportunities are extended for them to actively engage;
- There are opportunities for students to feedback on and actively engage in their social and educational experience, contributing their feedback, with their feedback considered as a minimum in the following areas:
  - curriculum design and development (both module and programme);
  - the suitability and accessibility of learning resources and programme materials;
  - academic support, including library services as well as pastoral care and other forms of learning, language and study skills support;
  - the quality of information and documentation made available;
  - recruitment, selection and admissions procedures;
  - the quality of feedback, i.e. on formative and summative assessment;
  - Pastoral, welfare and safeguarding support provided either by the partner or University.

2.2.31 Measures to facilitate and support student voice, engagement and feedback opportunities, and the expectations placed on the University and partner/s will be set out in the Operational Handbook for partnerships classified as Collaborative Provision, modelled on a Franchise, Validation, Joint and/or Dual Award and Co-Delivery arrangement at an undergraduate and postgraduate taught level and those partnerships of significant institutional scale, and be publicised to students, normally through a Student/Programme Handbook.

### **f) Approval of Teaching 'Associate Tutor' Staff**

2.2.32 Where academic staff employed by and based at an approved partner are involved in the teaching and assessment of Keele credit-bearing academic provision, each individual member of the teaching staff will require approval from the University before they can commence teaching. The relevant Keele School (in which the subject is aligned) would normally be expected to approve individual teaching staff, ensuring that they are suitably experienced and qualified to teach on the respective programme and, where relevant, meet necessary Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body requirements. This will normally require a review of staff CVs but may also require involvement in the recruitment and selection procedure by the School. Typically, partner staff delivering and/or assessing Keele programmes would be expected to be qualified at the level above the one they are delivering/assessing and have the necessary subject-specific expertise to provide high quality teaching.

2.2.33 The approval procedure will be repeated annually to approve any new staff teaching on the programme and to confirm the continuation of those already approved. This procedure must be completed every year before teaching commences. Approval would normally be given by the Head of School, in consultation with the Link Tutor/Programme Director. When approved, partner staff will normally be granted the title of 'Associate Tutor' with access to various University systems and online learning resources granted subject to successfully engaging in the University's requirements for IT account creation, which includes mandatory online training to be completed with regards to data sharing and security and cyber security. Such access may depend on additional security checks carried out at the time and may require the member of staff to prove their identity prior to access being granted. All staff when granted access to University systems and online learning resources are expected to abide by the University's conditions of use, and associated regulations and policies.

### **g) Staff Induction and Staff Development**

2.2.34 The University is committed to increasing the internationalisation of its staff, working with partners to facilitate multi-faceted collaboration, and, where appropriate, will explore and assist with the professional development of staff based at partners. For partnerships classified as Collaborative Provision, Deans of Internationalisation and Partnerships, the Educational Partnerships Team and Link Tutors/Programme Directors play a key role in the training of academic and Professional Services staff based at the partner, on relevant University regulations, policies, systems and procedures. As a minimum, staff based at partners delivering an element of Keele academic provision will be expected to participate in appropriately designated induction and training activities, including introductory workshops offered by the Keele Institute for Innovation and Teaching Excellence (KIITE), in order to effectively carry out their role and ensure clarity as to the University's expectations in the delivery of its academic provision. Academic staff at the University are also encouraged to enhance their scholarly activities together with academic staff based at partners, and the University will actively facilitate opportunities to collaborate at this level with its partners, with the aim of fostering an open and supportive environment for its staff to engage internationally.

2.2.35 Staff at partners involved with the delivery of Keele awards may also be invited to attend events and programmes offered by KIITE. The University may also offer other online programmes or short courses to support the further development of professional practice amongst staff based at partners where desired and will endeavour to support its own staff to undertake potential development opportunities offered by a partner.

2.2.36 Further information and expectations for staff training will be outlined in the Operational Handbook for each partnership, with staff development opportunities explored separately between the partner, Keele Faculty and School and central Professional Services. Introductory resources designed by KIITE available for staff based at partners will be made available via the University's Staff Intranet.

#### **h) Monitoring and Approval of Public Information**

2.2.37 All promotional materials devised and used by a partner in market that refer to the University or its programmes must be approved by the University prior to their use and where the University's name, logo and/or brand is used, be designed in keeping with Keele's brand guidelines. Approval can only be provided by the Director of Global Student Recruitment and Admissions or their nominee and the Director of Strategic Communications and Brand or their nominee.

2.2.38 Promotional materials which require approval include, but are not limited to, any form of printed or electronic communication or information which:

- refer to the partner's connection with the University;
- are used to recruit students or staff to a programme the University and partner collaborate to deliver;
- are used to attract funding or other support from public or private sector sources intended to impact a programme the University and partner collaborate to deliver;
- are used to inform the general public.

#### **i) The Link Tutor/Programme Director**

2.2.39 For partnerships classified as Collaborative Provision, a Link Tutor/Programme Director will be appointed for each programme by the associated School, acting as the main academic contact for the programme. Where a School is linked to more than one programme delivered through an educational partnership, discretion may be used regarding whether there should be a single Link Tutor/Programme Director for all programmes, or Link Tutors/Programme Directors appointed for each individual programme. Equally, if a partner has arrangements with more than one School at Keele, it should be agreed at the outset if this arrangement merits one or more Link Tutors/Programme Directors. Such arrangements will be costed into the Financial Business Case at the partnership approval stage and set out in the Operational Handbook. It is the responsibility of the School, in its contributions to the Financial Business Case for the partnership, to identify a suitably experienced member of academic staff as Link Tutor/Programme Director and factor in an appropriate allocation of time for the Link Tutor/Programme Director to carry out their role, on approval by the Faculty's Executive Dean and Head of Faculty Operations. Faculties, Schools and the member of staff appointed as a Link Tutor/Programme Director should work in accordance with the [Educational Partnerships – Roles and Responsibilities of Faculties and Schools](#) guidance and [Educational Partnerships – Link Tutor Role Descriptor](#). Dependant on the size, nature and geographical location of the partnership, the Educational Partnerships Team can provide advice on the suggested workload allocation for Link Tutors/Programme Directors, however, Schools should be aware that even small partnerships will make certain demands on the Link Tutor/Programme Director which cannot be scaled down. Therefore, this commitment should be carefully considered

by the School and Faculty during the development of a new partnership proposal or a partnership's expansion.

2.2.40 The Educational Partnerships Team will introduce each new Link Tutor/Programme Director to the role and maintain regular dialogue to coordinate the management and delivery of the partnership in line with the Operational Handbook for the partnership. The Link Tutor/Programme Director will also work closely with staff at the partner, especially academic staff overseeing the delivery of the programme/s.

#### **j) Assessment, Marking and Moderation**

2.2.41 For all Keele provision delivered through an educational partnership, in particular provision delivered through partnerships classified as Collaborative Provision, assessment design, delivery, marking and moderation exercises for all undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision will be undertaken in line with the University's regulations, specifically regulations in [Section D: Assessment, Progression and Achievement](#), and wider assessment, marking and moderation policies, including the [Keele Learning Principles](#), [Marking and Moderation Policy](#), [Assessment and Feedback Code of Practice](#), [Inclusive Education Framework](#) and Generic Marking Criteria. Any deviation from the University's regulations, discussed with partners during the approval and implementation phase, will be set out in the Operational Handbook for the partnership, with any programme specific deviations set out in the Programme Specification. For PGR partnerships classified as Collaborative Provision, the University's [Postgraduate Research Degrees Code of Practice](#) and [Regulation C9: Professional Doctorates](#) and [Regulation C10: Research Degrees](#) will apply, with any deviations set out in the legal agreement between the University and partner/s and made clear to students within their offer letter.

#### **k) Management of the Student Record**

2.2.42 During the exploration and development of a new partnership proposal, it should be determined at what stage students will be formally registered with the University. Registration must be considered in liaison with the Educational Partnerships Team and Student Records and Examinations Team and would normally only be permitted at the point in which students begin to study Keele provision specifically, whether credit bearing or non-credit bearing. Once a registered student of the University, the [University's Regulation C1: Maximum Periods of Registration](#) will apply. Student registration should also be considered alongside any requirements of the partner/s, with enrolment and re-registration procedures considered during the implementation of a new educational partnership.

2.2.43 Once registered, the student record will be managed by the University's Student Records and Examinations Team, in liaison with the partner/s. Depending on the model of partnership and requirements of the partner/s, the University, as the awarding body, must always hold an up-to-date and definitive record of a student's status and academic performance on any University provision, with any credit recognised from the partner/s recorded as appropriate on the University's student record to ensure the University has a clear record of a registered student's educational background and performance as it relates to a University award.

#### **l) Information and Digital Management**

2.2.44 Following any necessary consultation during the exploration and development of a new partnership proposal, as advised and coordinated by the Educational Partnerships Team, the University's Information and Digital Services should be consulted for any systems development work necessary during a partnership's implementation and/or where access to University systems is required by staff or students based at a partner. Arrangements for the management of information and digital services will be set out within the Operational Handbook for the partnership. In all circumstances where access is required, staff and students will be expected to abide by the University's conditions of use, and associated regulations and policies.

#### **m) Split Site PhD Management**

2.2.45 Each Split Site PhD arrangement will be regulated by a legal agreement between the University and the partner/s to ensure that for each individual PGR, appropriate and robust arrangements are in place for the duration of their research degree. These arrangements will be communicated to PGRs via an offer letter based on the content of the legal agreement between the University and the partner/s, which will be attached to the PGR's record, and should include, but not be limited to, details with regard to the regulatory framework under which a PGR will conduct their research, progression points, examinations, training and supervision.

2.2.46 The University will permit a degree of flexibility with regard to the time spent by PGRs at Keele and the level of tuition fee payable to Keele, although it is normally expected PGRs will spend a minimum period of residence at Keele of 12 months in total, which may be divided up into discontinuous periods, subject to visa considerations. For the time spent at Keele, normally full, applicable fees are payable to the University. The level of tuition fee payable to Keele for other periods is determined on a case-by-case basis and reflected in the financial and resource assessment within the Split Site PhD Proposal Form.

2.2.47 PGRs will normally be allocated two lead supervisors, one from each partner, with the expectation that there is a Keele lead supervisor as a minimum. The supervisory arrangements in place for the PGR should follow the expectations of the University's [Postgraduate Research Degrees Code of Practice](#) and guidance set out on the University's [Guidance and Forms for Postgraduate Researchers and Staff webpages](#). Where the partner does not have suitable supervisor training provision, supervisors will be expected to complete the Keele online supervisor training.

2.2.48 PGRs will undertake research training at Keele and the partner/s and follow the normal stages of a Keele research degree, including progression points, as set out in the Postgraduate Research Degrees Code of Practice.

2.2.49 Thesis and viva arrangements will follow the requirements set out in the Keele Postgraduate Research Degrees Code of Practice. Keele will appoint the examiners, with an independent Keele chair for the viva. The award is confirmed by the University's Research Degrees Committee.

#### **n) Joint and Dual PhD Management**

2.2.50 For Joint and Dual PhD arrangements specific requirements must be considered as set out below. The University will permit a degree of flexibility with regard to the time spent by PGRs at Keele and the level of tuition fee payable to Keele, although it is normally expected PGRs will spend a minimum period of residence at Keele of 12 months in total, which may be divided up into discontinuous periods, subject to visa considerations.

2.2.51 For Joint PhD arrangements there will be one degree certificate issued jointly by the partners. For Dual PhD arrangements separate degree certificates will be issued from each of the partners. The certificate will however normally make reference to the other partner(s).

2.2.52 The regulatory framework for Joint PhD arrangements will be based on a bespoke set of regulations specific to the arrangement and will be developed between the partners. For Dual PhD arrangements it may be necessary to develop bespoke regulations in order to ensure each of the partner's requirements are met, however it is likely each partner will, for the most part, implement their own regulations.

2.2.53 For Joint PhD arrangements a supervisor must be appointed at each partner. For viva examinations an internal examiner might be nominated at each partner with a joint decision made on one external examiner candidate. For Dual PhD arrangements, a similar approach may be undertaken ensuring the PGR undertakes only one set of examination arrangements, however where this may not be possible due to significant divergence in regulatory requirements, each partner will normally coordinate its own separate examination arrangements. PGRs will need to complete all examinations in order to be awarded a degree by each partner.

2.2.54 Research training expectations for Joint PhD arrangements will be agreed between the partners and recorded within a bespoke set of regulations. For Dual PhD arrangements the research training expectations of each partner will normally be maintained, and PGRs would need to fulfil both sets of requirements.

2.2.55 Each Joint and Dual PhD arrangement will be regulated by a legal agreement between the University and the partner/s to ensure that for each individual PGR, appropriate and robust arrangements are in place for the duration of their research degree. These arrangements will be communicated to PGRs via an offer letter based on the content of the legal agreement between the University and the partner/s, which will be attached to the PGR's record, and should include, but not be limited to, details with regards to the regulatory framework under which a PGR will conduct their research, progression points, examinations, training and supervision.

### **o) Certification and Awards**

2.2.56 For all educational partnerships the production of certificates and transcripts for Keele awards remains the responsibility of Keele University. All certificates and transcripts (and, where applicable, the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR)) are printed and issued by the University apart from Joint Awards in circumstances where the process for producing and issuing a shared certificate will be specified in the legal agreement. The wording of any documents confirming awards must be approved by the University. The University's transcripts (and HEAR) and, wherever possible, the degree certificates, will clearly indicate the location and language of study as

well as the name of any partner involved in the delivery where this makes up at least 120 credits of the student's programme.

### **p) Data Sharing and Protection**

2.2.57 All educational partnerships in which students register with the University, for example, at the point in which students begin to study Keele provision specifically, whether credit bearing or non-credit bearing, will normally require data sharing arrangements to be set out between the University and partner/s, enabling the University to comply as an awarding body with OfS requirements for maintaining and producing an accurate student record. Processes for the sharing of student data will normally be set out in the Operational Handbook for the partnership and in any instance in which student and/or staff data is shared between the University and partner/s, a data sharing agreement would normally be entered into which will make clear the terms in which data is to be shared and the protections to be put in place, in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018, and in line with the University's Information Governance Framework and Data Protection Policy. In all instances in which a data sharing agreement is required, the Educational Partnerships Team will liaise with the Project Assurance Contracts Team and/or Legal, Governance and Compliance to determine requirements, with data sharing agreements usually legally-binding and signed by the University's designated signatory in line with the University's Schedule of Delegation and Contract Approval and Signature Processes.

2.2.58 Prior to a data sharing agreement being entered into, all educational partnerships in which data is transferred between the University and partner will first require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be undertaken, which will normally be completed by the Educational Partnerships Team and submitted to the University's Data Protection Officer based within Legal, Governance and Compliance. The DPIA should be completed prior to any legal agreement being entered into. In addition, a Transfer Risk Assessment should be completed and regularly updated for any educational partnership entered into within a particular geographical area, i.e. a country. The Educational Partnerships Team will undertake and update existing Transfer Risk Assessments as new educational partnerships are approved, in liaison with the University's Data Protection Officer.

## 2.3 Monitoring and Review of Educational Partnerships

### a) Annual Partnership Review

2.3.1 For educational partnerships classified as Collaborative Provision and modelled on a Validation, Franchise, Joint and/or Dual Award and Co-Delivery arrangement at undergraduate and postgraduate taught level, partners are required to undertake an Annual Partnership Review during July – October for undergraduate programmes and July – January for postgraduate programmes, reflecting on the recently completed academic year. Using the [Annual Partnership Review Form](#), partners, normally via Associate Tutor Programme Leaders and designated leads at the partner, will be asked to comment on programme delivery, the student experience, operational experiences and any challenges affecting programme delivery and/or management of the partnership alongside any areas of effective practice. The reporting template and relevant data will be sent to the partner in July each year by the Educational Partnerships Team, with the expectation that the partner completes the report by October for undergraduate programmes and January for postgraduate programmes.

2.3.2 The guiding principles for the Annual Partnership Review are:

- to review the student learning experience in order to aid the University in determining that the programme/s delivered at/by the partner align to UK sector-recognised standards and those set by the Office for Students (OfS) for registered providers in England;
- to identify and reflect on any feedback and/or concerns arising from external examiner reports, student, staff and stakeholder feedback, the suitability of entry criteria, and trends in academic achievement, student retention and dependent on the available data, employment outcomes;
- to assess the overall performance of the programme/s delivered at/by the partner with regard to recruitment, student attendance, engagement, achievement and retention, staff resource, training and development, and that the programme/s continue to meet the original aims in market, identifying any areas for enhancement and using the review to drive forward improvements where required.

2.3.3 Upon receipt of the report from the partner, the Educational Partnerships Team will circulate the report alongside the original data used to inform the report to relevant Keele Link Tutors/Programme Directors, Heads of School, Faculty Deans of Internationalisation and Partnerships and Deans of Education, copying in the University's Quality Assurance Team. The relevant Keele School/s will be asked to consider the Annual Partnership Review report at their School Education Committee and feed any actions arising for the School from the report into their own action plans and integrated planning, which should be updated following the Annual Programme Review meetings for all provision delivered at and/or by Keele directly. Following consideration at School Education Committees, the reports will be submitted by the Keele Quality Assurance Team for consideration at Faculty Education Committee, which will normally consider Annual Programme Review reports alongside Annual Partnership Review reports in December for undergraduate programmes and March for postgraduate programmes. Completed Annual Partnership Review reports will also be submitted to the relevant Joint Steering Committee for the

partnership as well as the University's Educational Partnerships Committee (EPC). Where EPC in particular identifies any good practice, this will be disseminated to relevant University stakeholders by the Educational Partnerships Team, who may work with relevant Faculties, Schools and central Professional Services teams to consider how such practice could be embedded in other partnerships. Where EPC identifies any concerning trends or general concerns, these will be communicated to relevant University stakeholders and the partner to further explore with an expectation, where deemed necessary, any actions to remedy the concerns are addressed throughout the academic year. Where this is the case, the governance structures established for the partnership will be expected to oversee the implementation of identified actions, reporting regularly into EPC which will continue to monitor the delivery and effectiveness of the actions until remedied.

2.3.4 In addition to the Annual Partnership Review, the University will maintain regular oversight of student performance metrics through EPC, individual partnership Joint Steering Committees and Joint Boards of Study and other University forums as relevant, with live data reports maintained by the Educational Partnerships Team.

#### **b) Annual Strategic Performance Review**

2.3.4 An Annual Strategic Performance Review of active educational partnerships will be undertaken as a collaborative exercise between the International Partnerships Development Team, Educational Partnerships Team, relevant Faculties, Schools, and Link Tutors/Programme Directors. The Annual Strategic Performance Review will be undertaken for all active educational partnerships classified as Collaborative Provision modelled on a Validation, Franchise, Joint and Dual Award and Co-Delivery arrangement at undergraduate and postgraduate taught level on an annual basis following more regular projection and market reviews undertaken between the International Partnerships Development Team, Faculties, Schools and partners, building on such reviews to assess the ongoing strategic benefits of the partnership through key performance metrics, identified and potential risk areas and continued alignment with UK sector wide quality and standards expectations, including those set by the OfS in England, and the ongoing financial viability of the partnership. Between July and December, the Annual Strategic Performance Review will be undertaken, coordinated by the International Partnerships Development Team, completing the [Annual Strategic Performance Review Form](#) which, once complete, will be considered by EPC in January followed by the Strategic Education Partnerships Group, reporting into the University Executive Committee (UEC) as appropriate.

2.3.5 Split Site PhD, Joint and Dual PhD arrangements will be monitored during their contractual term by the relevant Faculty PGR Committee and University Doctoral Academy Committee.

2.3.6 It may be necessary, as a result of mitigating circumstances, to deviate from the annual monitoring procedure outlined above. Any deviation will first be approved by EPC and will always take a proportionate and risk-based approach.

#### **c) Programme and Module Student Evaluation**

2.3.7 In any instance in which University credit-bearing provision is being delivered at and/or by an educational partner, and particularly with regard to a University award, an equivalent approach to programme and module evaluation as undertaken by the University must be facilitated and

implemented. With regard to programme level evaluation, the University will work with educational partners to ensure a localised evaluation process for the programme as a whole is implemented, recognising national student surveys at undergraduate and postgraduate taught level across the UK cannot be extended to students associated to an educational partner. Such programme evaluations will take into account the student learning and social experience across their programme of study and where possible align to similar evaluative themes considered as part of the national student surveys implemented across the UK, whilst recognising the local context and nature of the student experience associated to an educational partner whilst studying University provision. It will normally be the responsibility of the Link Tutor/Programme Director to ensure suitable programme evaluation mechanisms are implemented, working with the educational partner and normally Associate Tutor Programme Leader to coordinate such evaluations and review responses, which should be considered comprehensively through the Joint Board of Studies (or equivalent) and Annual Partnership Review and Annual Strategic Performance Review.

2.3.8 As with programme evaluation, module evaluation mechanisms should also be implemented across all University modules delivered at and/or by an educational partner, in line with the University's [Student Module Feedback Policy](#) and [Student Module Feedback Procedure](#). Where it is possible to utilise the same procedures as module evaluation for University programmes delivered at and by the University this should be explored, with suitable and equivalent alternatives implemented where this is not possible. The University will work with educational partners to ensure a localised evaluation process for University modules is embedded. It will normally be the responsibility of the Link Tutor/Programme Director to ensure suitable module evaluation mechanisms are implemented, working with the educational partner and normally Associate Tutor Programme Leader to coordinate such evaluations and review responses, which should be considered comprehensively through the Joint Board of Studies (or equivalent) and Annual Partnership Review and Annual Strategic Performance Review.

#### **d) Review of Programme Endorsement Services**

2.3.9 Schools must review an endorsed organisation's provision on an annual basis, using the original Programme Endorsement Services Review Form and submit this to their Faculty Education Committee (FEC) for renewed approval. Where it is determined either by the School or their FEC that the external organisation's provision does not meet the standards of the University in the area proposed for endorsement, the external organisation may either update its provision in accordance with feedback from the University, or withdraw from the endorsement service, at which point the legal agreement between the University and partner organisation will be terminated, and all University Intellectual Property including trademarks and brand are to be removed from the external organisation's published information and communications.

2.3.10 The Educational Partnerships Team will carry out annual checks to ensure the University's Intellectual Property, in relation to its trademarks and brand, are being used in accordance with the terms of the legal agreement between the University and partner organisation.

#### **e) The Educational Partnerships Register**

2.3.11 Predominately managed by the Educational Partnerships Team and International Partnerships Development Team, the University maintains a formal register of all approved and currently active educational partnerships, based on partnership models set out in this Code of Practice. The Register holds a range of operational and performance data on active partnerships including but not limited to, recruitment performance against contractual obligations and expectations set out in Financial Business Cases (where relevant) and contractual term dates. Updates to the Educational Partnerships Register are submitted regularly to UEC (or Strategic Education Partnerships Group as determined) and EPC and other University committees as required for consideration.

#### **f) External Examiners**

2.3.12 The external examining system is a key mechanism implemented within the University for setting, maintaining and ultimately assuring the academic quality and standards of the University's awards. For most educational partnerships classified as Collaborative Provision or institutional partnerships of significant scale, the lead Keele School is responsible for nominating a suitable external examiner for the provision delivered through the partnership. Nominations will be scrutinised by the University's Quality, Academic Standards and Education Policy Sub-Committee (QASEP) before submission to the University's Education Committee for formal approval. In some circumstances, the same external examiner or examiner team that examines a programme or provision delivered at the University (where substantially similar) may be appointed to examine the provision delivered at a partner, i.e., in the case of Franchise arrangements, to better facilitate comparison between provision delivered at Keele and the partner. External examining procedures for provision delivered under a partnership model classified as Collaborative Provision should be equivalent to those used by the University for provision it delivers as set out in the University's [External Examiners Code of Practice](#). Specific responsibilities of the external examiner for a partnership modelled on a Franchise, Validation, Joint and/or Dual Award and Co-Delivery arrangement at an undergraduate and postgraduate taught level and those partnerships of significant institutional scale will be specified in the Operational Handbook.

2.3.13 External examiners for a partnership modelled on a Franchise, Validation, Joint and/or Dual Award and Co-Delivery arrangement at an undergraduate and postgraduate taught level and those partnerships of significant institutional scale, would normally be supported by the lead School to meet with the relevant programme team and students at the partner online, and on exception, the University may consider supporting an external examiner to visit the partner at least once during their tenure.

2.3.14 External examiners are expected to write an annual report, which the University's Quality Assurance Team will make available on the University's website, and which the lead School, usually via the Link Tutor/Programme Director, is responsible for sharing with the partner. Link Tutors/Programme Directors are encouraged to discuss external examiner findings with partners and where indicated in a report, determine where enhancements can be made and actioned as appropriate. Students will be able to access external examiner reports through the University website, and this will be communicated via the Student/Programme Handbook so that students are aware of the availability of such reports, which may also be discussed at Student Staff Voice Committee meetings (or equivalent).

### **g) Periodic Partner and Partnership Review**

2.3.15 For partnerships modelled on a Franchise, Validation, Joint and/or Dual Award and Co-Delivery arrangement at an undergraduate and postgraduate taught level and those partnerships of significant institutional scale, a Periodic Partner and Partnership Review is required on a periodic basis, normally aligned with the expiration of the legal agreement. At the start of each academic year, the Educational Partnerships Team will establish whether an existing agreement is due to expire in the proceeding calendar year and consult with the Pro Vice-Chancellor International, International Partnerships Development Team and relevant Faculty and School to establish whether a partnership should be renewed and on what terms the renewal should proceed. Further consultation may be required through UEC and/or EPC.

2.3.16 If determined the partnership should be renewed, a Periodic Partner and Partnership Review will be scheduled six (6) months prior to the expiration of the legal agreement, culminating in a report generated for UEC to make a final decision as to whether a partnership should be renewed. The report will be presented to UEC at least four (4) months prior to a new cohort starting to ensure that, should it be decided that a partnership should not be renewed, no further cohorts are enrolled and partnership termination and withdrawal procedures are initiated.

2.3.17 Where the term of a legal agreement extends beyond five (5) years, unless otherwise specified in the legal agreement, a Periodic Partner and Partnership Review will normally take place prior to the five (5) year anniversary upon which the legal agreement came into effect. Designed based on a risk-based approach, recognising the complexity of the partnership and the nature and scale of the provision, broadly, the Periodic Partner and Partnership Review requires a full panel event chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor International and/or Pro Vice-Chancellor Education, which will make a recommendation to UEC within the report generated from the findings of the event. As part of this event, the Panel will normally meet with existing students studying the provision attributed to the partnership, and the relevant Keele Faculty and School will be asked to complete the [Periodic Partner and Partnership Review Form](#) with input from the International Partnerships Development Team and Educational Partnerships Team, providing the panel with the Faculty and School's analysis of the partnership being reviewed, as well as a central University perspective, alongside documentary evidence. The final decision on the format and scale of the Periodic Partner and Partnership Review event will rest with the Pro Vice-Chancellor International, Pro Vice-Chancellor Education and Educational Partnerships Team.

2.3.18 The table below sets out an indicative summary of the type of review event required periodically, however in the case of each partnership, the Educational Partnerships Team will provide initial advice on the most suitable periodic review procedure.

#### **Periodic Review Requirements (indicative)**

<b>Type of Arrangement</b>	<b>Recommended Periodic Review Procedure</b>
Co-Delivery of Keele Award	Full Periodic Partner and Partnership Review with UEC Approval to Renew/Continue
Dual Award	Full Periodic Partner and Partnership Review with UEC Approval to Renew/Continue
Dual PhD Award	Faculty PGR Committee and University Doctoral Academy

	Committee Review and Approval to Renew/Continue
Franchise	Full Periodic Partner and Partnership Review with UEC Approval to Renew/Continue
Joint Award	Full Periodic Partner and Partnership Review with UEC Approval to Renew/Continue
Joint PhD Award	Faculty PGR Committee and University Doctoral Academy Committee Review and Approval to Renew/Continue
Validation	Full Periodic Partner and Partnership Review with UEC Approval to Renew/Continue
Offsite Delivery/ Flying Faculty	Full Periodic Partner and Partnership Review with UEC Approval to Renew/Continue
Split Site PhDs	Faculty PGR Committee and University Doctoral Academy Committee Review and Approval to Renew/Continue

2.3.19 For Programme Endorsement Services arrangements, at the start of each academic year the Educational Partnerships Team will establish whether an existing agreement is due to expire in the proceeding calendar year ahead and consult with the relevant Faculty and School to establish whether a partnership should be renewed. If it is determined the partnership should be renewed, a request to renew the partnership will be put to Faculty Executive Group (FEG) for approval.

2.3.20 Regardless of how the periodic review is conducted, in order for an existing educational partnership to be renewed, the University must be satisfied that:

- the partnership remains aligned with the University's strategic aims, academic/research strategy and portfolio;
- the partnership continues to be supported by the senior leadership team in the University and from the partner organisation;
- the programme/s delivered through the partnership will continue to meet the appropriate academic standards and offer students the learning and employment opportunities necessary to achieve the learning outcomes and graduate employment according to the relevant target market;
- the arrangements for the partnership will continue to enable the University to maintain its responsibilities for the academic standards of its awards and the quality of the student learning experience;
- student attendance, engagement, achievement and retention is comparable with other University students and continues to meet the expectations of the University with regards to the University's regulatory obligations;
- the partner and partnership continues to meet the University's principles for engaging with and delivering Keele programmes through educational partnerships set out in this Code of Practice;
- where there are requirements in relation to professional body recognition or in-country approvals, these will continue to be met;
- a new Financial Business Case can demonstrate that the partnership remains financially viable and sustainable;
- the ongoing legal, financial and organisational stability of an existing partner and the regulatory environment in which it operates can be assured.

## **h) Expanding Provision**

2.3.21 In some cases the University and existing educational partner may wish to expand its partnership, to increase the portfolio of programmes delivered through the partnership either within the same subject area or within an entirely different subject area, and/or embark on a new model of collaboration. A proposal to expand an existing educational partnership may be led by a member of the senior leadership team, the partner or by a Keele School, Faculty or Professional Service.

2.3.22 Where there is a desire to expand an existing educational partnership already aligned to models set out in section 1.3 of this Code of Practice, and where aligned to an overseas partner and partnership, the International Partnerships Development Team will advise on the initial viability of the proposal, and work with the relevant University teams, including the Educational Partnerships Team, Keele School, Faculty and partner to further explore the proposal before further resource is committed to developing it. This will normally involve a viability assessment drawing on market analysis, alignment to University strategic aims and indicative income and cost analysis. If the International Partnerships Development Team, Pro Vice-Chancellor International, Keele Faculty, School and Educational Partnerships Team agree there is scope to expand the partnership, usually following an endorsement of the viability assessment carried out by the International Partnerships Development Team, a proposal can then proceed to the next stage of partnership development and approval in accordance with the relevant approval route, which the Educational Partnerships Team will advise on, as well as additional requirements for approval, such as further due diligence on the partner and partnership, the development of or an update to the Risk Assessment, and a Financial Business Case, as well as a possible partner approval visit (where required). Where further University consultation is required on an expansion proposal, the Educational Partnerships Team will coordinate the necessary consultation to inform the expansion proposal.

2.3.23 Any proposals to expand a partnership aligned to a UK partner and partnership should be brought to the attention of the Educational Partnerships team who will coordinate a similar procedure, working with the relevant Faculty and School, with the proposal circulated to members of the UK Partnerships Working Group, and where necessary, the Strategic Education Partnerships Group to consider the opportunity before the initial expansion proposal can proceed.

2.3.24 Once the approval route and the viability of the proposal has been confirmed, for expansion proposals modelled on a Validation, Franchise, Joint and Dual Award and Co-Delivery arrangement, a [Partnership Expansion Proposal Form](#) must be completed, usually as a collaborative exercise between the lead School, Faculty (usually led by the Faculty Deans of Internationalisation and Partnerships), International Partnerships Development Team and Educational Partnerships Team. At the same time, where required, a Financial Business Case for the expanded provision should be completed, according to a set template, by the Head of Faculty Operations or in cases where more than one Faculty is involved, jointly by Heads of Faculty Operations, with input from the Keele Finance Directorate. In addition, where required, the Educational Partnerships Team will liaise with the partner to coordinate due diligence and update/generate the Risk Assessment, and coordinate preparations for a partnership approval visit (where required).

2.3.25 Expansion proposals will normally be considered via a single stage approval procedure normally undertaken by UEC. Once complete, the Partnership Expansion Proposal Form (and where

required, a Financial Business Case and Risk Assessment) will be submitted to UEC by the Educational Partnerships Team. All proposals for the expansion of an educational partnership, particularly where the expansion is classified as Collaborative Provision, should be endorsed by the relevant Faculty Executive Group/s and Pro Vice-Chancellor International prior to submission for approval.

2.3.26 In circumstances in which a proposed expansion is modelled on another form of collaboration, such as a Split Site PhD, Programme Endorsement Service (or another model of collaboration not covered by this Code of Practice, including those set out in the Recruitment Partnerships Procedure), the standard procedure for approval of that model of collaboration will normally be pursued via the normal approval route for that model. The Educational Partnerships Team will advise on the correct approval route following initial consideration by the International Partnerships Development Team of the proposed expansion's viability.

2.3.27 Following approval of a partnership expansion proposal, the Educational Partnerships Team will work with the Project Assurance Team and/or Legal, Governance and Compliance/an external legal organisation to amend the existing legal agreement, or where necessary, draft a new legal agreement, with further implementation work undertaken in accordance with Section 2.2 of this Code of Practice dependent on the model of partnership. It is important that any expansion proposal takes into consideration in-country approval and a suitable time frame for implementation, based on the model of collaboration.

### **i) Risk Management and Oversight**

2.3.28 Following the approval of an educational partnership, and those based on a model classified as Collaborative Provision, any initial assessment of risks carried out by the Educational Partnerships Team and set out formally in a partnership's Risk Assessment will continue to be monitored throughout the term of a partnership by EPC and through annual monitoring exercises, with EPC reporting into the University's central Audit and Risk Committee on a regular basis where institutional level risks are identified. The Educational Partnerships Team will keep partnership Risk Assessments under review continuously, and where mitigation strategies are evaluated and no longer deemed suitable, will be updated accordingly to ensure the University maintains an agile approach to risk, with the principles for engaging with and delivering Keele programmes through educational partnerships as set out in section 1.4 of this Code of Practice repeatedly tested within each partnership's Risk Assessment.

### **j) Cause for Concern**

2.3.29 In the event that there is a serious concern identified regarding the quality or standards of the provision delivered through an educational partnership, an existing and/or emerging risk cannot be reasonably mitigated, or an event or series of events that cannot be resolved through existing University regulations and policies, the University's [Cause for Concern Protocol](#) should be initiated. The protocol operates on a basis of transparency and openness, and is based on a phased and proportionate approach, beginning with an informal enquiry and only progressing to a full review where this is considered to be necessary in the light of evidence gathered.

2.3.30 The protocol may be initiated by a Link Tutor/Programme Director, an external examiner, a student, the Educational Partnerships Team, the International Partnerships Development Team, School, Faculty or another University stakeholder where there is reason to believe that the normal governance arrangements set out in section 2.2 d) of this Code of Practice may not be able to address the issue with the urgency required or where a confidential or commercially sensitive enquiry may be necessary in the first instance. The Educational Partnerships Team will work with relevant University stakeholders to gather the evidence leading to the concern, which may be, but not limited to, a highly critical external examiner report, negative student feedback of a serious nature, evidence of failings in standards not addressed within the course of one calendar year, data showing increasingly poor student achievement and/or retention, or cohort size not sufficient to sustain the quality of the student experience or financial sustainability of the partnership. This will be presented to the Pro Vice-Chancellor International and Academic Registrar. Together, they will determine a timescale for the key stages in the cause for concern procedure, including deadlines for an improvement plan. This will be communicated to the partner by the Educational Partnerships Team and flagged at EPC, which will monitor the proposed improvement plan.

2.3.31 The exact nature of the cause for concern may be such that an inspection visit to the partner by the University may be required. This may be undertaken at the early stages of the investigation of the concern and/or following it to confirm the remedial action taken by the partner.

### **k) Partnership and Programme Termination**

2.3.32 Either partner may initiate the termination of a partnership, or where relevant, a programme delivered through a partnership, subject to the termination clauses set out in the legal agreement. This may be triggered by changes in the regulatory environment in which the partnership must operate, in the levels of demand for the provision delivered through the partnership, the partnership's financial viability or due to irreconcilable differences over the management and operation of the partnership. All decisions to terminate a partnership and/or programme by the University require prior approval from UEC.

2.3.33 Upon termination of the legal agreement, and dependent on the terms of the agreement, the partner/s and University will cease their obligations as set out in the legal agreement. For educational partnerships where programmes are delivered at/by the partner, the partner/s will cease to operate the programme/s except in respect of students already enrolled prior to the date the termination of the agreement comes into effect. Any decision to terminate an agreement must therefore be subject to satisfactory arrangements being made for existing students to complete their programme and be assessed for the award for which they are registered. Such teach-out arrangements will be determined by agreement between the University and the partner and will require review by the relevant FEC using the [Teach Out Plan](#) template, which will thereafter be overseen by EPC. The Teach Out Plan should be established before any formal variation to the legal agreement is undertaken. Teach out provisions must also be conducted in accordance with the University's [Student Protection Plan](#). The following matters need to be considered and agreed prior to a legal agreement being terminated:

- The date at which the agreement, and therefore the partnership, should end;
- Confirmation of the final recruitment point and cohort recruited;

- Confirmation of who will communicate the decision to all internal and external stakeholders, including current students and applicants, and through marketing communications and materials (where necessary);
- A commitment to provide all enrolled students with every opportunity to complete their programme of study as approved wherever possible;
- Agreement by the partner/s to maintain appropriate academic standards for students remaining on the programme/s until complete or the maximum period of registration has expired;
- Teach out responsibilities and arrangements.

2.3.34 Once termination has been agreed between the partner/s and by the University, a Termination Letter will normally be issued by the Educational Partnerships Team, signed by the designated University signatory. Where a Variation Agreement is determined to be required, this will be generated by the Educational Partnerships Team in consultation with the Project Assurance Team and/or Legal, Governance and Compliance/an external legal organisation and other relevant University stakeholders and signed by the designated University signatory and partner.

### **3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **a) Educational Partnerships Team**

3.1 The Educational Partnerships Team is responsible for overseeing the management of educational partnerships classified as Collaborative Provision and strategic institutional educational partnerships from their inception through to their approval (institutional and external), implementation and ongoing operation, reporting regularly to the University executive Committee and other University governance bodies as required as well as Educational Partnerships Committee (EPC) on the University's active educational partnerships through associated performance data.

3.2 The Educational Partnerships Team works closely with staff at all levels from across the University and its proposed and approved educational partners in order to carry out its responsibilities in partnership management as defined in this Code of Practice and partner specific Operational Handbooks, and ensure the adherence to University policies and regulations with regards to partnership delivery, encompassing recruitment and admissions, enrolment and registration, programme delivery (including quality assurance), student support, student progression, achievement and graduation.

3.3 The Educational Partnerships Team provides initial advice on new educational partnership proposals, supporting the International Partnerships Development Team where aligned to an overseas partner and partnership in their initial viability assessments of new proposals before supporting their submission through the relevant University procedures for approval, engaging with a range of stakeholders to ensure robust educational partnership proposals are developed. Following University approval of a new educational partnership, the Educational Partnerships Team will coordinate the procedures for and input into the contract development and negotiation process, working with the relevant Keele and partner stakeholders and prepare the necessary documentation for external in-country approval.

3.4 The Educational Partnerships Team coordinates the implementation of new and expanded educational partnerships, working alongside staff at all levels from across the University and the partner to design and embed a robust, efficient and comprehensive framework for partnership management and operation, as well as programme delivery, taking into account existing University systems, structures and its regulatory and policy framework as well as the partner's. The Educational Partnerships Team is responsible, alongside Faculties and Schools, for ensuring that a partnership is ready to operate, students able to be recruited and the programme/s (where applicable) ready to be delivered in accordance with set deadlines, ensuring that all University and partner stakeholders understand their roles with regards to partnership and programme delivery via clear documentation.

3.5 Once approved and implemented, the Educational Partnerships Team maintains responsibility for the ongoing oversight of educational partnerships alongside Faculties and Schools and relevant central Professional Services, supporting partnership monitoring and evaluation procedures as set out in this Code of Practice and the governance arrangements implemented for the partnership (where applicable), reporting into the relevant central University governance bodies. The Educational Partnerships Team acts as a central point of contact for any enquiries related to the

partnership which could not immediately be dealt with by the named contacts within the partnership's operational framework.

3.6 Working alongside Heads of Faculty Operations, Global Student Recruitment and Admissions and other relevant colleagues within the University, the Educational Partnerships Team provides regular assessments on the performance of educational partnerships against set criteria and utilising extensive data sets, to ensure the ongoing viability of a partnership, with a particular focus on student performance metrics to ensure they continue to meet University expectations and those regulated through the Office for Students.

3.7 The Educational Partnerships Team, working with staff at all levels from across the University, works to actively embed internationalisation structurally within University services, developing robust and inclusive frameworks and networks across educational partnership governance and operation, supporting the internationalisation of the University's policies, procedures, structures and communications to meet external regulatory expectations and ensure suitability for a diverse student population.

3.8 The Educational Partnerships Team, in active collaboration with relevant University Faculties, Schools and central Professional Services, maintains responsibility for updating and coordinating the University's policies and procedures with regard to educational partnership management, including this Code of Practice, ensuring sector wide regulation and best practice is reflected within the University's policies and procedures, providing advice and guidance on external drivers impacting partnership development and management and ensuring a proportionate balance is embedded within University policies to facilitate innovation whilst managing risk.

3.9 The Educational Partnerships Team is responsible for coordinating the University's approach to risk management in relation to educational partnerships, identifying University and individual educational partnership risks and developing suitable mitigation strategies where possible, identifying residual risks and reporting to the relevant governance bodies on an ongoing basis to ensure a comprehensive oversight of risk as it relates to educational partnerships is embedded across the University and at all levels.

3.10 The Educational Partnerships Team provides support for relevant educational partnership-based Committees within the University and those shared with partners, ensuring sector wide updates to regulation and external drivers impacting partnership development and management are appropriately reported within the University and individual partnership governance structures, alongside proposed solutions to address such external developments, in active collaboration with relevant University Faculties, Schools and Services.

### **b) Global Student Recruitment and Admissions**

3.10 Global Student Recruitment and Admissions provides institutional leadership and management for all matters relating to Keele's future students, ensuring the University develops and meets ambitious recruitment targets and helps prospective students from around the world make an informed decision about what and where to study. The Global Student Recruitment, Partnerships

and Access Team are responsible for the delivery and coordination of all recruitment activities at undergraduate and postgraduate level both in the UK and overseas. The Global Student Recruitment, Partnerships and Access Team are responsible for coordinating the University's college partnerships and supporting recruitment-based activities linked to the University's college partnerships as well as other UK partnerships, and for recruitment-based partnerships according to models and variations thereof set out in the Recruitment Partnerships Procedure, with ultimate responsibility for aligning recruitment-based partnership activities to wider strategies for international student recruitment, ensuring their effective coordination, implementation and ongoing management and review.

3.11 The International Partnerships Development Team, based in the Global Student Recruitment, Partnerships and Access Team are responsible for coordinating the strategic development of international educational partnerships alongside the Pro Vice-Chancellor International and Faculties, and will work with the Pro Vice-Chancellor International, individual Faculty Deans of Internationalisation and Partnerships, School International Directors and central Professional Services including the Educational Partnerships Team and Global Opportunities Team to develop holistic strategies for international partnership development aligned to identified key geographies.

3.12 The International Partnerships Development Team assess the viability of all new international educational partnership opportunities and existing educational partnerships in which an expansion is proposed, drawing on market analysis, alignment to University strategic aims, indicative income and cost analysis and credibility of the prospective partner to determine whether the University should proceed in the development of a full proposal, and will coordinate the development of proposals prior to their approval, working with the Educational Partnerships Team, individual Faculty Deans of Internationalisation and Partnerships, Schools and other central Professional Services as necessary to ensure a robust proposal is developed according to the procedures set out in this Code of Practice.

3.13 Following the approval of international educational partnerships the International Partnerships Development Team coordinates the Annual Strategic Performance Review of international educational partnerships providing input from a strategic, financial and recruitment performance perspective, and will actively collaborate within the University, with educational partners and relevant in-country bodies to coordinate the promotion of the University's educational partnerships with a view to enhancing the University's global profile.

3.13 Global Student Recruitment and Admissions maintain responsibility for coordinating the oversight and development of the University's programme portfolio, working closely with Faculties and the Quality Assurance Team in the approval of new programmes, and programme suspension and withdrawal. In addition, Global Student Recruitment and Admissions will provide essential input during partnership implementation with regards to marketing strategies, admissions processes and entry criteria, with responsibility for the ongoing management and oversight of admissions within a partnership's operational framework.

3.14 Working alongside Heads of Faculty Operations, the Educational Partnerships Team, Global Student Recruitment and Admissions and other relevant colleagues within the University, the International Partnerships Development Team provides regular assessments on the performance of

educational partnerships against set criteria and utilising extensive data sets, to ensure the ongoing viability of a partnership against its original Financial Business Case.

### **c) Keele Doctoral Academy**

3.15 The Keele Doctoral Academy (KDA) brings together research expertise from across the University's academic and professional services to support postgraduate researchers (PGRs) and their supervisors, providing an overarching support system for all matters relating to postgraduate research, including oversight and coordination of PGR data, governance, policies and regulations, and training. The KDA provides advice and guidance on the development of new PGR partnerships and, working alongside the Educational Partnerships Team, coordinates the approval, implementation and ongoing management and monitoring of PGR partnerships, including those set out in the PGR Partnerships Framework attached as an appendix to this Code of Practice (**Appendix 1**).

### **d) Quality Assurance Team**

3.16 The Quality Assurance Team within the University's Academic Registry are responsible for quality assurance and standards processes designed to safeguard the University's academic standards and improve the quality of the student experience. The Quality Assurance Team manage the programme approval, modification, suspension and withdrawal processes, alongside Global Student Recruitment and Admissions, overseeing module and programme information and approval within the University's systems and governance, and coordinate the mechanisms within the University's quality assurance framework for external review of programmes, annual monitoring and enhancement activities. For educational partnerships, the Quality Assurance Team will work with Schools, Faculties and the Student Records and Examinations Team to ensure the relevant module and programme information is fully approved, entered accurately onto the University's systems and recorded via Module and Programme Specifications, and coordinate with Schools external examining arrangements, with input into the annual monitoring procedures for partnerships classified as Collaborative Provision, working alongside the Educational Partnerships Team.

### **e) Student Records and Examinations Team**

3.17 The Student Records and Examinations Team within the University's Academic Registry manage and maintain the definitive records for students within the University's Student Record Management System (SCIMS), with responsibility for building and maintaining the systems infrastructure of University programmes and a student's status from enrolment through to graduation. The Student Records and Examinations Team undertake a critical role in the implementation of new partnerships and their ongoing operation and will be consulted in the development of new educational partnerships where deviations from standard models of delivery are considered. Broadly, responsibilities of the Student Records and Examinations Team in educational partnerships encompass the following:

- implementation of programme operations via the University's Student Record Management System;
- creation of programme structure on the University's Student Record Management System;

- creating and maintaining the student record, Keele card production and distribution, validation of a student's record, maintenance of student records and any status changes, calculation of a student's progression/award, keeping and circulating agendas and minutes of Boards of Examiners, releasing and communicating results outcomes to students and staff, producing degree certificates, transcripts and the student HEAR (where applicable).

#### **f) Project Assurance Contracts Team and Legal, Governance and Compliance**

3.18 For PGR partnerships overseen by this Code of Practice, the Project Assurance Contracts Team within the Directorate for Research Innovation and Engagement provide legal support, overseeing the drafting of the legal agreement coordinated by the Educational Partnerships Team and KDA, and in some circumstances advising on any legal considerations in relation to the legal agreement. For partnerships at undergraduate and postgraduate taught level, dependant on the risk associated with the partnership, the Project Assurance Contracts Team may also provide legal support in circumstances in which a partnership is deemed low risk by the Educational Partnerships Team. Partnerships deemed to be of high risk by the Educational Partnerships Team will be supported by Legal, Governance and Compliance, or, on their nomination, through an external legal organisation, providing advice on legal and compliance matters relating to new and existing partnerships as well as contractual matters as required. All legal agreements for partnerships classified as Collaborative Provision will be stored in a central repository managed by the Project Assurance Contracts Team and Legal, Governance and Compliance.

3.19 The Immigration, Compliance and Advice Team within Legal, Governance and Compliance support and advise staff and students on all aspects of compliance with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) student visa requirements. Any educational partnership which embeds an element of students studying in the UK as part of their studies must be considered according to UKVI requirements and therefore the Immigration, Compliance and Advice Team must be consulted during the development stages of any proposed educational partnership.

#### **g) Information and Digital Services**

3.20 Information and Digital Services (IDS) are responsible for maintaining the University's digital infrastructure, including access to key education delivery and student support systems and the University's library resources. IDS will undertake a critical role in the implementation and ongoing operation of educational partnerships, particularly those classified as Collaborative Provision, and should be consulted during the development of a new partnership proposal where there may be a bespoke requirement for access to or development of University systems and digital resources.

#### **h) Keele Faculties**

3.21 Keele Faculties work closely with central Professional Services and the academic and Professional Services teams at an educational partner to ensure the effective development, and subject to approval, operation of, educational partnerships, and maintain responsibility for the effective delivery of programmes delivered through educational partnerships located within their Faculty. The Executive Dean maintains ultimate responsibility for programmes aligned to their Faculty, with Faculty Executive Groups endorsing any new educational partnership proposal prior to

it being submitted for approval. Faculties should ensure that all new partnership developments align to the Faculty's strategy for global partnership engagement and internationalisation as well as wider strategies for education and research. Keele Faculties will also support the development of Financial Business Cases where required, usually through the Head of Faculty Operations alongside the Finance Directorate. In most cases, in relation to partnerships at undergraduate and postgraduate level, the Dean of Internationalisation and Partnerships will undertake a key role in leading on new partnership proposals aligned to the Faculty, and actively engage in the ongoing management and monitoring of partnership arrangements once established, alongside Deans of Education and Heads of School.

### **i) Keele Schools**

3.22 Keele Schools work closely with central Professional Services and the academic and Professional Services teams at an educational partner to ensure the effective operation of an educational partnership, particularly with regard to programme delivery and student experience, working with the Faculty's Dean of Internationalisation and Partnerships, International Partnerships Development Team and the Educational Partnerships Team during the development, approval and implementation of a new educational partnership and other central Professional Services teams across the University on an ongoing basis once the partnership is established. In most cases, particularly in relation to partnerships at undergraduate and postgraduate level, the School's International Director will undertake a key role in contributing where required to educational partnership proposals, in liaison with the Head of School, and actively engage in the ongoing management and monitoring of programmes aligned to the School delivered through educational partnership arrangements once established. Keele School's will also appoint a Link Tutor/Programme Director as required for each programme aligned to the School delivered through an educational partnership arrangement, according to the [Educational Partnerships – Link Tutor Role Descriptor](#).

Further information on the responsibilities and key role of Faculties and Schools in educational partnerships is set out in the [Educational Partnerships - Roles and Responsibilities of Faculties and Schools](#) guidance.

### **j) Keele Students' Union and Keele Postgraduate Association**

3.23 The Keele Students' Union (KeeleSU) and Keele Postgraduate Association (KPA) represent the interests of all students registered with the University, including those studying through educational partnerships. The KeeleSU and KPA provide Faculties and Schools with support in student voice and representation, engagement and student feedback, supporting the coordination of social activities, events and campaigns, and provide general independent student support services. The KeeleSU and KPA will normally provide support in the implementation of new educational partnerships, working with the Educational Partnerships Team, Faculty, School and partner to embed suitable frameworks representing students' interests and ensuring the University's expectations with regards to student voice, engagement and feedback are understood and embedded.

### **k) Keele Language Centre**

3.24 The Keele Language Centre carries out a pivotal role informing and contributing to English Language and cultural educational skills across educational partnerships. The Language Centre also

assesses the language abilities of students studying through an educational partnership and determines specific, targeted support. The Keele Language Centre works with staff at the University and partner to maintain academic quality and standards in English language delivery and ensure students are equipped to succeed on a Keele programme.

#### **i) Student Services**

3.25 Student Services provides support for students and staff according to services offered across the University's campus, working with educational partners to ensure equitable services are available locally at the partner for any student registered with the University, ultimately ensuring there are equitable support mechanisms in place to enable students to succeed on their University provision regardless of where they are based. Through the University's Student Experience and Support Teams, local educational partner student support teams and programme teams are supported to ensure the effective implementation of University procedures particularly as they relate to Exceptional Circumstances, Reasonable Adjustments and student health, safety and wellbeing and as such, the Student Experience and Support Team undertake a pivotal role in contributing to the implementation of educational partnerships and supporting the effective management of programme delivery and the student experience thereafter.

#### **j) Other Professional Services**

3.26 Other central Professional Services across Keele will take an active role in advising on new partnership proposals as they are developed, especially where there are aspects of the provision that deviate from standard aspects of existing support. These Professional Services will undertake a key role in advising on and establishing a new partnership proposal, developing the operational framework that underpins a new partnership once approved and supporting the development and implementation of systems, policies and processes as part of their operational delivery.

## 4. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

4.1 This Code of Practice should be read in conjunction with the University Regulations and Policies indicated and linked to in the Sections above. All University Regulations and Policies relevant to the operation of an educational partnership will be referenced in the Operational Handbook or similar for each partnership.

In addition, see attached the following appendices linked to this Code of Practice:

- Appendix 1 PGR Partnerships Framework
- Appendix 2 Recruitment Partnerships Procedure

## 5. REVIEW, APPROVAL & PUBLICATION

5.1 This Code of Practice will be reviewed at a minimum of every three years, though may be updated more frequently to ensure it accurately reflects any structural and/or organisational changes, and changes to University Regulations and Policies, taking account of external regulatory developments that may need to be reflected.

5.2 In accordance with the [University Policy Framework](#), this Code of Practice is approved by the University Executive Committee following recommendation from Education Committee, and informed through Educational Partnerships Committee.

5.3 This Code of Practice will be published on the [University's Policy Zone](#), and [Educational Partnerships Intranet pages](#).

## 6. ANNEXES

- Appendix 1 PGR Partnerships Framework
- Appendix 2 Recruitment Partnerships Procedure

## 7. DOCUMENT CONTROL INFORMATION

<b>Document Name</b>	Educational Partnerships Code of Practice
<b>Owner</b>	David Hazelgrove, Head of Educational Partnerships, Academic Registry
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<b>Equality Analysis Form</b>	05/01/2023
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<b>Date of Commencement</b>	January 2026
<b>Date of Last Review</b>	January 2026
<b>Date for Next Review</b>	January 2029
<b>Related University Policy Documents</b>	Regulations A – E, Postgraduate Research Degrees Code of Practice, External Examiners Code of Practice, Student Academic Misconduct Code of

	<p>Practice, Examinations and Open Book Assessment Code of Practice, Academic Mentoring Code of Practice, Assessment and Feedback Code of Practice, Exceptional Circumstances Code of Practice, Student Voice Code of Practice, Marking and Moderation Policy, Generic Marking Criteria, Learning Principles, Support to Study Policy, Student Attendance and Engagement Policy, Admissions Policy, Recognition of Prior Learning Policy, Student Module Feedback Policy, Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled Students Policy, Inclusive Education Framework, Sexual Misconduct Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Freedom of Expression Code of Practice, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Objectives, Framework for Quality Monitoring, Enhancement and Approval of Academic Provision.</p>
<i>For Office Use – Keywords for search function</i>	

## **Appendix 1 PGR Partnerships Framework**

The current version of the PGR Partnerships Framework can be accessed via the staff intranet here:

<https://keeleacuk.sharepoint.com/sites/ar-intranet/SitePages/Educational-Partnerships-Team.aspx>

## **Appendix 2 Recruitment Partnerships Procedure**

The current version of the Recruitment Partnerships procedure can be accessed via the staff intranet here:

<https://keeleacuk.sharepoint.com/sites/ar-intranet/SitePages/Educational-Partnerships-Team.aspx>