



COLLABORATIVE PROVISION

CODE OF PRACTICE

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| Approval and Amendment History | |
| Version 5.0, approved by Education Committee and Academic Strategy Group, March 2021. | |
| <i>This version of the Code of Practice replaces the previous version of this Code of Practice which was last approved by Senate in June 2019.</i> | |
| Lead | Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct |
| Code of Practice to be formally reviewed | Annually |
| Date of next formal review | March 2022 – Postponed until November 2022 |

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Abbreviations

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| ASG | Academic Strategy Group |
| CAP | Collaborative Provision & Partnerships Sub-Committee |
| FEC | Faculty Education Committee |
| GSRA | Global Student Recruitment and Admissions (Directorate) |
| KDA | Keele Doctoral Academy |
| KeeleSU | Keele Students' Union |
| KLE | Keele Learning Environment (Blackboard) |
| KIITE | Keele Institute for Innovation and Teaching Excellence |
| KPA | Keele Postgraduate Association |
| MoA | Memorandum of Agreement |
| MoU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| PSRB | Professional Statutory Regulatory Body |
| QA | Quality Assurance Team |
| QAA | Quality Assurance Agency |
| RIE | Research, Innovation and Engagement (Directorate) |
| RPL | Recognition of Prior Learning |
| SCIMS | SITS Student Records Management System |
| SEC | School Education Committee |
| SSVC | Student Staff Voice Committee |
| TNE | Transnational Education |
| UEC | University Executive Committee |

1. Context

a) Introduction

1.1 This version of the Code of Practice for Collaborative Provision replaces the 2019 version of the Code of Practice. The Code takes a broad view of collaborative provision in line with external expectations contained in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and supporting Advice and Guidance and has been updated to reflect revisions to the University's Professional Services and committee structure. This Code of Practice builds on the experience and good practice developed across the University in the area of collaborative provision, particularly in transnational education.

1.2 This Code should be read in conjunction with the supplementary guides and forms which are referenced throughout this document and which are available on the [University's collaborative provision webpages](#). Oversight of the guides and forms will be the responsibility of the Collaborative Provision and Partnerships Sub-Committee (CAP) on behalf of the Senate.

1.3 For any collaborative arrangement leading to credit or an award of the University, Keele takes ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, irrespective of where these are delivered or who provides them. This Code aims to ensure that arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with a partner are implemented securely and managed effectively. Within this context, the University is adopting a risk-based approach to ensure that the effort invested is commensurate with the complexity of the collaboration, and the status and nature of the partner as ascertained through due diligence. 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 collaborative arrangements based on the capacity of 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.

1.4 The University recognises that collaborative provision covers a wide range of activities and this Code is therefore broadly based to cover 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 articulates a shared understanding of the nature of collaborative provision wherever it occurs and clarifies the necessary quality assurance requirements to ensure the University meets its responsibilities as a UK degree awarding body, and its duty of care and contractual obligations to students, external stakeholders such as Professional and Statutory Bodies (PSRBs) and to its partner institutions.

1.5 This document provides guidance to those who are involved in the development or management of collaborative provision. However, the University recognises that in this dynamic and innovative field, the boundaries between different types of arrangements can often be fluid and proposals may be hybrids of the arrangements described in section 1c.

b) Scope

1.6 This Code of Practice covers a wide range of activities, including articulations, validated programmes, franchises, dual/joint awards, and flying faculty/off-site delivery. Section 1c lists in more detail which types of arrangements fall under this Code of Practice. The processes set out in this Code of Practice will apply to all new partnerships approved by the Academic Strategy Group (ASG) on behalf of the University Executive

Committee (UEC), following ratification of this Code. Existing partnerships will be reviewed with the aim to align them where possible.

1.7 There are a number of areas which, although covered by the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) Quality Code, do not fall under this Code of Practice, mainly because they are covered by policy elsewhere in the University. Examples of provision not covered in this Code of Practice are work-based learning or practice-based learning, study abroad, online learning and CPD.

c) Definitions

1.8 Collaborative provision is defined here as 'educational provision leading to an award, or to specific credit toward an award, of an awarding institution delivered and/or supported and/or assessed through an arrangement with a partner organisation'. This Code of Practice covers specifically the following arrangements which are defined below:

- **Articulation:** This is where cohorts of students from an identified course at a feeder institution gain advanced standing for entry towards a named programme at Keele University. The entry criteria and/or volume of credit from a programme/programmes of study at an approved feeder partner to be transferred are pre-determined under the agreement. Keele University is responsible for assuring itself that the standards set and achieved by students at the feeder institution are equivalent to those set and achieved by Keele University students taking the programme and entering at the same stage. Examples of such agreements can include direct entry into the second year or third year of a programme at Keele. The University is responsible for students progressing through an articulation agreement being able to obtain a good degree, which is why normally the programme at the feeder institution will be delivered in English, unless at least two thirds of the students' programme is taken at Keele, or students progressing to Keele can demonstrate sufficient English language ability upon entry to achieve a good degree outcome. For all undergraduate programmes in which students enter into the final year, the degree classification will normally be based on Keele credit only, for exceptions where partner credits are counted towards the degree classification, these must have been taught and assessed in English.

At Keele there are two formats of articulation, however only one of these is classed as collaborative provision:

- **i) Articulation Arrangement with Fast Track Recognition of Prior Learning (Non-Collaborative Provision)**
These arrangements are for entry into levels 5 or 6 of a Keele programme, with advanced standing considered through a bespoke Recognition of Prior Learning procedure (RPL). These arrangements are recorded in an institutional agreement, usually with a 5 year term, however the RPL is always considered on an individual student basis and entry is not guaranteed.
- **ii) Guaranteed Articulation Agreement (Collaborative Provision)**
Guaranteed articulation arrangements are made at institutional level and guarantee students entry into level 5 or 6 with advanced standing. No RPL is required. The student successfully completing the agreed part of the programme at the partner will automatically have the right to progress to Keele, providing the English language requirements have been met. Since progression into a designated Keele programme with advanced standing will be guaranteed, institutional approval is required through the standard procedures set out in the Collaborative Provision Code of Practice.

- **Co-Delivery:** This describes an arrangement whereby the awarding institution 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 institution and the partner. In some cases the external organisation may also provide the facilities in which teaching takes place. In most cases all responsibilities for managing the partnership are covered by the awarding body.
- **Dual Award (Dual Parchment):** A combined package of study leading to two separate qualifications awarded by two separate awarding bodies. The award titles and learning outcomes for the awards may differ depending on the extent of overlap of programme curricula. In most cases students on a dual award programme will study at both institutions.. While a dual award programme may be based on an existing programme/s either at the partner or at Keele University, it should be structured as a joint initiative, designed and developed by both partners to offer a distinctive learning experience.
- **Dual PhD:** A dual PhD enables students to receive separate PhD awards from two partner institutions involved in a joint research degree programme, following research undertaken by the student at each institution. In most cases both University's would administer their own quality assurance, standards and examination and regulatory processes. At the end, the student will receive two awards and two degree certificates, one from each contributing institution.
- **Franchise:** This is where an existing Keele programme or award is designed, assessed and quality assured by Keele University but delivered by an approved partner institution. An example of a franchise arrangement is a 3+0 undergraduate taught programme. Successful students graduate with a Keele University award. The partner will usually conduct all teaching and initial marking associated with the programme, with Keele undertaking moderation. The University may delegate the recruitment and selection of students to the partner institution subject to agreed admissions criteria and monitoring arrangements. Keele University remains fully responsible for the quality of the student learning experience and academic standards of the award. For this reason, the University would not normally agree to a serial franchise arrangement.
- **Joint Award:** This is where Keele and one or more other degree-awarding institutions collaborate to design, deliver and assess a programme. Students would normally study in one or all of the degree-awarding institutions collaborating. At the end, the student will receive a single award and a single degree certificate, which carries the logos of all contributing institutions. The University may enter into joint awards with other recognised higher education providers under Regulation E.1. Normally, for Keele to wish to be part of a joint award consortium, a distinctive and substantial part of the programme would be provided by Keele.
- **Joint PhD:** A Joint PhD enables students to receive a single joint PhD for the collaborative research undertaken at two institutions. Both University's would contribute with a jointly agreed framework for administering quality assurance, standards and examination and regulatory processes. At the end, the student will receive a single award and a single degree certificate, which carries the logos of all contributing institutions. Often the arrangement is characterised by:
 - Students meeting the academic requirements of both institutions;
 - A joint governance and regulatory framework;

- Joint supervision of students by nominated and qualified staff at both institutions;
 - A single degree awarded for one PhD thesis jointly recognised by both partners;
 - Certificate indicating there has been joint supervision.
- **Multiple Award:** There may be occasions when there may be legal or regulatory impediments and further difficulties with the recognition of a single joint certificate which may not be in the best interest of students having an achievement marked in the way described for a joint award. In this instance students may be awarded two (or more) certificates, one from each awarding body involved. This must however make reference to the other awarding bodies and make clear that they refer to a single, jointly conceived programme. Such an arrangement would be referenced a 'multiple award'.
 - **Off-Site Delivery Overseas (including Flying Faculty):** This is where members of Keele University staff provide block teaching, often supplemented by distance and e-learning, in an off-campus location overseas. This may be in collaboration with a local 'host' institution which is providing access to resources (IT, classroom, library etc.) or local academic support. Due to the particular challenges presented by flying faculty arrangements overseas (students studying under Flying Faculty arrangements will be expected to understand and study to UK HE conventions whilst not being immersed in it, and the ability of the University to provide ongoing support at a potentially great distance as well as legal and taxation implications), these arrangements are subject to formal approval by ASG, whether they include 'local host' arrangements or not. Off-site delivery in the UK is not considered collaborative provision for the purposes of this Code of Practice. Responsibility for oversight of off-campus delivery and the impact on the student experience for these types of arrangements rests with the Faculty Education Committee (FEC).

Split Site PhD: This is defined as a research degree which leads to a Keele award and involves students being registered for a research degree at Keele whilst spending a significant period of their research away from the University, at another approved institution¹, which can, but does not have to be, overseas. All Split Site PhDs require a learning agreement between Keele and the student, and a formal agreement between Keele and the partner institution(s). The Split Site PhD is used to increase collaborative research and develop international partnerships and is usually typified by an arrangement that is dependent on the partner and is therefore classed as collaborative provision. Programmes which are jointly developed, include contributions from two or more degree-awarding institutions or that lead to awards from Keele and another institution, do not fall into this category but are classed as joint or dual awards instead and follow those processes.

For further information on the models of PGR partnerships and their requirements, please refer to the PGR Partnerships Framework.

- **Validation:** This is where a programme is developed, delivered and assessed by a partner whilst being awarded and quality assured by Keele University. Keele University is responsible for ensuring the standards of the programme are equivalent to its own programmes. In exceptional circumstances, where the University does not offer a comparable programme, the University will carefully benchmark the standards of the validated programme against comparable programmes offered elsewhere in the UK

¹ It is expected that in most cases Split Site PhD arrangements will be entered into with other Universities, however new proposals will be reviewed on an individual basis, including those from other organisations.

higher education sector. The approved partner institution is responsible for the design of the programme and quality of the student learning experience.

d) Principles Underpinning all Collaborative Provision Arrangements

1.9 Collaborative provision at Keele:

- Must initially be and remain consistent with the [University Strategic Plan](#) and the relevant Faculty strategies for international recruitment and partnership development, where available;
- will be delivered with high quality partners who have demonstrated to the University that they have appropriate academic standards, an academic strategy which is complementary to Keele's, good academic reputation, a suitable infrastructure, and the necessary financial and legal standing to ensure that Keele University's reputation and the academic experience of its students is not compromised by the collaboration;
- is subject to the University's quality management activities for collaborative provision as set out in this Code of Practice;
- will offer an equitable student experience for all students, regardless of the location of delivery;
- will have English as the primary language of instruction and assessment, except in exceptional circumstances in line with those set out in this Code of Practice;²
- will be entered into at an institutional (rather than School or local) level and signed off by the designated University signatory as set out in the Schedule of Delegation;
- will provide institutional level benefits;
- must be initially and remain financially viable and sustainable, fully costed and priced accordingly as set out in a Business Case that will be reviewed at the appropriate stage, and regularly thereafter³;

e) Key Roles of Professional Services, Faculties and Schools in Collaborative Provision

The Quality Assurance Team

1.10 The Quality Assurance Team (QA) oversees processes for the approval of new partnerships, conducting and coordinating due diligence on proposed partner institutions/organisations and contributing to and coordinating the approval of a partnership proposal through the Committee system. QA works with various Professional Services and Keele Faculties and Schools in developing partnership proposals. For teaching partnerships QA will liaise with the International Partnerships Development Manager, updating the Pro Vice-Chancellor Education throughout. For PGR partnerships, QA will work with the Keele Doctoral Academy throughout. QA also works closely with the Project Assurance Team and/or the Head of Legal, Governance and Compliance/an external legal organisation to liaise on the legal position of a proposed partnership and draft the legal agreement, facilitating dialogue with the proposed partner during contractual negotiations.

1.11 QA administers the ongoing operational framework for a partnership where applicable, governance, monitoring and oversight of a partnership, overseeing the annual review process and periodic review of a partnership at the point of contractual expiry. QA develop processes in consultation with the Committees of

² Delivery in a language other than English will be approved only in exceptional circumstances, for which there is a clear strategic rationale.

³ The Business Case should take into account all costs associated with the partnership be they incurred by the proposing School or centrally.

the University, and based on external criteria, to mitigate risk and maximise the successful management of collaborative provision arrangements.

Global Student Recruitment and Admissions

1.12 GSRA maintains the knowledge, expertise and contacts in key markets to the University across the globe and access to a wide range of information that can evaluate the market and recruitment risks associated with a proposed new partnership. GSRA will endeavour to provide initial advice and market insight to those seeking to develop a proposal.

1.13 The International Partnerships Development Manager within GSRA, alongside the Academic Director: Global Partnerships, will review the validity of an initial proposal, brought forward either by a Keele member of staff or through external sources, before it proceeds to wider discussions across the University and a formal proposal is established. This will encompass the following:

- Advise on the proposed partner institution: to include background information on the legal, financial and academic standing of the prospective partner institution and any cultural, academic or other issues that should be taken into consideration, in consultation with other Professional Services;
- Conduct with input from GSRA early market analysis of the country in which the proposed partner institution is based and the programme area being proposed;
- Record the proposals brought forward and approaches from external sources within an institutional register;
- Advise on the model of partnership and the type of agreement required, in consultation with other Professional Services;
- Maintain responsibility for forwarding new proposals with scope to develop for wider consultation within the University and supporting, alongside the Collaborative Provision Officer, the drafting of the New Partnership Proposal Form to be considered by CAP and ASG.

Project Assurance Team/Head of Legal, Governance and Compliance

1.14 Where a partnership is Faculty specific, the Project Assurance Team provide legal support, advising on the legal status of a proposed partner institution/organisation and on legal matters relating to existing partnerships. The Project Assurance Team also oversee the drafting of the legal agreement where programmes of study leading to academic credits and/or awards of Keele are to be delivered. Where a partnership is cross-Faculty or University specific, support is provided either by the Head of Legal, Governance and Compliance, or through an external legal organisation.

Keele Faculties

1.15 Keele Faculties will maintain responsibility for partnerships located within their Faculty, with the Executive Dean maintaining ultimate approval for a new partnership proposal to proceed to ASG or, in the case of PGR partnerships, the University Doctoral Academy Committee for approval. Faculties should ensure that all new partnership developments align to the Faculty's strategy for partnership development and

internationalisation as well as wider strategies for learning, teaching and research. Keele Faculties will also have ultimate responsibility for developing Business Cases where required, usually through the Head of Faculty Operations. In most cases, in relation to teaching partnerships, the Faculty Internationalisation Director will undertake a key role in leading on new partnership proposals from the Faculty, and actively engage in the ongoing management and monitoring of partnership arrangements once established.

Keele Schools⁴

1.16 Keele Schools will usually act as the 'owners' of a partnership proposal. Schools will therefore work with the International Partnerships Development Manager and the QA Team during the development, approval and implementation of a new partnership and on an ongoing basis once the partnership is established. For PGR partnerships, Schools will work with QA and the Keele Doctoral Academy. In most cases, in relation to teaching partnerships, the School's Academic Lead for Internationalisation will undertake a key role in leading on new partnership proposals from the School, and actively engage in the ongoing management and monitoring of partnership arrangements once established.

For applicable collaborative provision partnerships, Schools will:

For teaching partnerships:

- Approach the International Partnerships Development Manager and Collaborative Provision Officer for initial advice on potential proposals to establish an international partnership;
- Establish connections with the proposed partner institution/organisation and introduce such connections to the International Partnerships Development Manager and Collaborative Provision Officer and other Professional Services staff as necessary;
- Undertake the relevant approval process in consultation with the International Partnerships Development Manager and Collaborative Provision Officer and with authorisation from the Head of School, Head of Faculty Operations and Faculty Executive Dean, who will be responsible for presenting new collaborative provision partnership proposals to ASG;
- Work with the School/Faculty Management and Head of Faculty Operations to establish a Business Case;
- Develop the programme content in accordance with the University's Collaborative Provision Code of Practice and Programme Approval procedures;
- Establish and resource a member of staff to undertake Link Tutor responsibilities;
- Work with the Collaborative Provision Officer to develop the Operational Framework for the partnership once approved and prepare for implementation;
- Coordinate the approval of teaching staff at the partner (where required) and facilitate dialogue between teaching teams;
- Manage the day to day operations of the partnership with relation to the programme;
- Contribute to annual monitoring of the arrangement.

For PGR partnerships:

⁴ Further information on the responsibilities and key role of Schools in collaborative provision, including details of the Link Tutor role can be found in the [School Responsibilities and Roles in Collaborative Provision](#) guidance.

- Approach the Keele Doctoral Academy for initial advice on potential proposals to establish a PGR partnership;
- Establish connections with the proposed partner institution/organisation and introduce such connections to the Faculty's Dean of Research, Keele Doctoral Academy and other Professional Services staff as necessary;
- Undertake the relevant approval process in consultation with the Keele Doctoral Academy and Collaborative Provision Officer and with authorisation from the Head of School, Head of Faculty Operations and Faculty's Dean of Research;
- Work with the School/Faculty Management and Head of Faculty Operations to establish a Business Case;
- Establish with the Keele Doctoral Academy and Postgraduate Research Officer in QA, an appropriate learning agreement for the students under the partnership, aligned to the provisions set out in the legal agreement;
- Manage the day to day operations of the partnership with relation to the programme;
- Contribute to annual monitoring of the arrangement as required.

Other Professional Services

1.17 Other Professional Services Teams (and for PGR partnerships, the Keele Doctoral Academy) 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 current support. These Professional Services Teams will undertake a key role in advising on and establishing a new collaborative provision partnership proposal, developing the operational framework that underpins a new collaborative provision partnership once approved and supporting the development and implementation of systems, policies and processes as part of their operational delivery.

2. Approval Process for Collaborative Provision Partnerships

a) Overview of Partner Approval

2.1 Approval arrangements for new partners will vary depending on the nature of the collaboration and are considered as part of a risk-based approach⁵. Any arrangement covered by the definitions in Section 1c will be required to go through Partner and, where applicable, programme approval. [The Triage and Approval Flowcharts](#) outline the process for approval for each arrangement, normally the following approval processes will apply:

| Type of Arrangement | Approval Process |
|--|---|
| Franchise of an existing Keele award | Partner approval by ASG. |
| Validation of a new or existing award of a partner | Partner approval by ASG and a programme approval process. Both processes can usually take place in parallel. |
| Guaranteed Articulation | Partner Approval by CAP via a modified (reduced) partner approval process and a Curriculum Mapping exercise overseen by FEC. |
| Co-Delivery of Keele Award | Partner approval by ASG. |
| Joint Award | Partner approval by ASG and a programme approval process. Both can usually take place in parallel. |
| Offsite Delivery/ Flying faculty | A modified (reduced) partner approval process by ASG. Where approved provision is delivered without required modifications, no programme approval process is necessary. |
| Dual Award | Partner approval process by ASG and a programme approval process. Both can usually take place in parallel. |
| Split Site PhDs | A modified (reduced) partner approval process by University Doctoral Academy Committee as outlined in section 2f. |
| Joint/Dual PhD | A modified (reduced) partner approval process by ASG as outlined in section 2g. |

b) Initial Exploration and Investigation

2.2 Initial enquiries as to the potential for developing a new partnership may be generated predominantly either through acquisition by a member of the Senior Management Team, an approach by a prospective partner or through acquisition by a Keele School, Faculty or Professional Service. In each case the initial proposal should be assessed by the Pro Vice-Chancellor Education on advice from the Academic Director: Global Partnerships, Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct, International Partnerships Development Manager and Collaborative Provision Officer. This may require discussions between the Keele School, Faculty and prospective partner to determine the initial validity of a proposal at its earliest stage before further resource is committed to developing it.

⁵ In some circumstances, where a proposal varies from the standard models of collaboration, the Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct may agree that a variation to the approval process should be permitted. As such the final submission process and documentation requirements may vary, the Collaborative Provision Officer will advise early on prior to proceeding.

2.3 If the Keele Faculty, School and Pro Vice-Chancellor Education decide that there is scope to further explore a partnership development and proceed with the next stage of partnership approval.

2.4 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 its partner/s are willing to explore ways of working together. The International Partnerships Development Manager, working with the Project Assurance Team, will provide the template for any MoU which must be formally signed by the designated University signatories. The MoU is not a legal agreement and a formal contract will therefore also be required once the partnership has been approved by the University.

2.5 A full set of Triage and Approval Flowcharts are available on the Keele University [Collaborative Provision Forms & Guides webpages](#), providing an overview of the process for approval, from initial enquiry through to contract development for each model of collaboration.

Please refer to Section 2f) for the approval processes related to Split Site PhD arrangements, and Section 2g) for Joint/Dual award PhD arrangements.

c) The Partnership Proposal

2.6 The [New Partnership Proposal Form](#) must be completed, usually by the lead School (for example the School's Academic Lead for Internationalisation) and submitted to ASG for approval. The Partnership Proposal Form provides ASG with the necessary understanding of the nature of the proposal, the risks associated with the proposal and rationale for pursuing it. Prior to any partnership proposals for new collaborative partnerships being presented to ASG, proposals should be scrutinised at CAP, which will make recommendations for ASG to consider in relation to the proposal and may request further clarification and exploration of a proposal before it can be submitted to ASG. All proposals for new collaborative provision partnerships must have the full support of the relevant Executive Dean. It is the responsibility of the Executive Dean to present the proposal to ASG for consideration, having sought prior approval from the Pro Vice-Chancellor Education and Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct.

2.7 The relevant School in which the programme to be delivered through the partnership is primarily based, will lead on the development of the partnership proposal, with the support of the International Partnerships Development Manager and Collaborative Provision Officer. Whilst developing a new proposal, the following Professional Services should be consulted through the development process:

- the [Library](#), to ensure e-resources and licenses for the new provision can be arranged and to assess the cost implications thereof;
- the [Project Assurance Team](#) and/or the [Head of Legal, Governance and Compliance/external legal organisation](#), to consider the legal jurisdiction and framework in which the partnership will operate and ensure there is no delay in the timely preparation of contractual documents;
- [KIITE](#), for exploring implications to new programme design where applicable, any potential support required to deliver a Keele award digitally and where suitable, in the development of any staff external to Keele who are going to be involved with the delivery or assessment of a Keele award;
- [Student Records and Examinations](#), for ensuring that data transfer arrangements are put in place for student records and results and that suitable processes can be established to manage the operational details of the partnership;

- Student Services, to ensure that any student support requirements have been considered and to assess the impact of proposed learning, teaching and assessment methods on students studying at partner institutions;
- Information and Digital Services, to advise on IT requirements as part of the proposal and ensure appropriate licenses, software and hardware are in place in advance of the first intake, and to provide access to Keele IT infrastructure where applicable for tutors at partner institutions;
- Finance, to ensure that all relevant taxation and costing considerations are taken into account in the development of the Business Case;
- Human Resources, to ensure that any staffing implications of the proposal, particularly in models of flying faculty or where it is intended to grant tutors associate staff status, are given due consideration;
- Estates, to ensure that the estates planning process is aware of new collaborative developments where these have impact on facilities or resources on campus, such as laboratories, student/staff accommodation or classrooms;
- KeeleSU and KPA as applicable, to ensure that consideration is given to whether and how students at the partner institution might be able to access services and facilities provided by the KeeleSU and KPA;
- Keele Language Centre, to advise on the language of delivery of a programme to be delivered in partnership, ensure that consideration is given to English language skills of prospective students and the qualifications relating to English language teaching staff;
- Legal, Governance and Compliance Team, to advise on any immigration/visa requirements that may impact on the proposal;
- 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 secure a UCAS code where applicable, to agree the entry requirements, a qualification checking approach and/or to agree the admissions process for students transferring to Keele at later stages of their programme of study.

2.8 It may be beneficial in some circumstances, for example large scale partnerships with cross-Faculty input, to establish a working group to meet regularly throughout the development of the partnership proposal, overseeing the development of the legal and due diligence investigations, preparations for the partner approval visit (where applicable), the development of the Business Case and the development of the programme (where applicable). Membership of such working groups will be determined based on the nature of the proposal and may fluctuate dependant on the agenda. It would normally include; the Faculty Executive Dean or nominee (as chair), Head of relevant School(s), Faculty/School Business Manager, Faculty Internationalisation Director, Academic Director: Global Partnerships, Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct, Associate Director of Global Recruitment and Access, International Partnerships Development Manager and the Collaborative Provision Officer.

2.9 It may also be necessary at this stage to put in place a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) to prevent a partner from breaching confidentiality with regard to commercially sensitive information exchanged as part of the negotiations. Advice on this issue can be provided by the Project Assurance Team and/or the Head of Legal, Governance and Compliance who have responsibility for overseeing the preparation and sign-off of such agreements.

2.10 All contracts and agreements with collaborative partners will be drafted by either the Project Assurance Team or the Head of Legal, Governance and Compliance/an external legal organisation, working closely with the Quality Assurance Team, senior School and Faculty staff and Keele Finance Team. Individuals and Schools

must ensure that they do not purport to establish, or act in a way which may be misunderstood as establishing a contractual relationship. If in any doubt, the words “subject to contract” should be included in any correspondence.

Business Case

2.11 A Business Case⁶ is required for all collaborative provision partnerships, to be submitted alongside the Partnership Proposal Form to CAP for initial scrutiny and ASG for final approval. The Business case will normally be completed by the Faculty and refers to all sources of evidence regarding the financial quality and viability of the partnership proposal. A University template will be made available by the Collaborative Provision Officer at this stage. The full Business Case will normally be developed by the Head of Faculty Operations or in cases where more than one Faculty is involved, jointly by all Head of Faculty Operations concerned with the proposal, with input from the Keele Finance Team.

Due Diligence

2.12 The University is required to consider the reputation, standing and academic performance of all prospective partners. This is to ensure the quality of education delivered as part of the collaboration, and to protect the University’s reputation. The due diligence process is coordinated centrally by the Collaborative Provision Officer in the QA Team. The Collaborative Provision Officer will undertake desk-based research, work with the prospective partner to collate the responses and all documentation required according to the relevant Due Diligence Questionnaire and seek external specialist advice where necessary. A reduced checklist will apply for some proposals, for example those involving UK HEIs with degree awarding powers. As part of the process, references for the new partner will be sought from their existing UK University partners where appropriate. The information provided under the legal and finance sections of the Due Diligence Questionnaire will be reviewed by the Project Assurance Team and/or the Head of Legal, Governance and Compliance/an external legal organisation, the Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct, and by the Finance Team prior to submission to ASG, although specialist external expertise may be required for more complex or international matters. Via the relevant proforma, any issues and concerns arising from the due diligence information will be brought to the attention of CAP for consideration prior to ASG via a final report collated by the Collaborative Provision Officer. ASG will be asked to provide a risk judgement on behalf of the University on partnerships which might pose a higher risk to the University.

2.13 Unless the proposal is UK-based, external legal and taxation advice will normally 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 Business Case.

Partner Approval Visit⁷

2.14 For the majority of collaborative provision partnership proposals a partner approval visit would normally be undertaken by a Keele delegation appointed by the Pro Vice-Chancellor Education on the recommendation

⁶ The University uses a standard template for all collaborative provision partnership Business Cases. Please contact the Collaborative Provision Officer in the QA Team for a copy of the template.

⁷ Not all types of collaborative provision require this type of visit to the partner. The Collaborative Provision Officer will advise as to whether a visit is required.

of the Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct. The associated costs of such a visit should be recorded in the Business Case under validation costs. Whilst it would normally be expected that a partnership approval visit takes place prior to the final submission of a proposal to ASG, thus allowing findings of the visit to be reflected in the proposal considered by ASG, in some exceptional circumstances a visit may be postponed until after ASG has considered a partnership proposal. In such circumstances, it would be expected that ASG provides provisional approval, pending the findings of an institutional visit.

2.15 The delegation 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 will not normally be required to comment in detail on programme-specific resources as this information will be provided by the School, based on exploratory discussions and potential earlier visits documented in the Partnership Proposal Form. At least half of the internal members of the deputation must not previously have been involved in the planning and development of the proposed arrangement. For overseas Validation, Franchise, Joint/Dual Award and Co-Delivery arrangements, the panel will also contain at least one external assessor with experience in the quality assurance of overseas collaborative provision. Members of the deputation should include staff who are able to provide expertise in relation to academic, quality assurance and/or international issues (where appropriate). The number of staff conducting the visit will depend upon the complexity of the proposed arrangement, the level of risk and will be determined on a case by case basis by the Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct, although there will normally be at least three panel members. Unless the proposed collaboration is for a validation or joint/dual award where the partner approval visit also serves to approve the collaborative programme, it is not always necessary for the external advisor to be a subject-specialist.

2.16 The partner approval visit will always include a tour of all relevant facilities at the proposed partner and meetings with senior managers, teaching and support staff and with students of the proposed partner institution. An 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.

2.17 The final approval of the proposed partner and partnership rests with ASG and therefore any feedback provided by the delegation should purely be seen as developmental, until committee approval has been obtained. The deputation will produce a full written report. The report may contain recommendations and conditions for further work to be undertaken before the proposal is ready to be considered by ASG for final approval.

2.18 It is the responsibility of the Joint Steering Committee, 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 ASG, it comes to the attention of the Joint Steering Committee that the partner's situation has changed significantly in ways which may affect the circumstances in which the programme is offered, this has to be brought to the attention of the Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct. In consultation with the Pro Vice-Chancellor Education it will then be decided whether to request a further institutional visit to confirm that the partner can still offer the standard of provision which was originally approved.

e) Partnership Approval

2.19 Prior to the submission of a partnership proposal to ASG, it must first be reviewed by CAP⁸, which, as a Committee, will provide recommendations to the School and/or Faculty as to whether further considerations of certain aspects of the proposal are required prior to ASG submission. Where no further consideration is required, CAP will set out a series of recommendations where applicable, and as a Committee, on approval by the Chair, recommend a proposal for approval. As such, CAP should receive a proposal in full, normally including the following documentation:

- a) New Partnership Proposal Form;
- b) Business Case
- c) Due Diligence Report
- d) Partner Approval Visit Report
- e) Curriculum Mapping (where applicable)

2.20 For Guaranteed Articulation Arrangements, a partnership proposal does not require ASG submission, but will be submitted to CAP for final approval. As such, only the Partnership Proposal Form and Curriculum Mapping needs to be submitted. Curriculum mapping should also be approved by FEC prior to CAP submission.

2.21 Following CAP scrutiny, ASG 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 ASG is of the view that the proposal is in line with the University's Strategic Plan, academic portfolio, wider operational plans for student recruitment, international growth and, based on the available information, likely to be financially viable, a partnership proposal may be approved. Where ASG 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 of ASG have been met. Where it has not been possible to undertake an Institutional Visit prior to ASG submission, ASG will normally only provide provisional approval of a partnership, pending receipt and consideration of the Institutional Visit Report.

f) Split Site PhD Approval

2.22 For Split Site PhD partnerships, relevant Faculty's Dean of Research and Keele Doctoral Academy should first be consulted regarding any new potential proposals and will advise on the model of partnership, exploring whether alternative models may be more appropriate. If it is confirmed that there is scope to develop a formal proposal for a Split Site PhD arrangement, the Faculty Executive Dean should be consulted to ensure a proposal is endorsed in principle by the Faculty.

2.23 Once endorsed in principle by the Faculty, a [Split Site PhD Proposal Form](#) should be completed by the Faculty or lead School, providing information on the anticipated number of students, funding streams, tuition fee level, resource requirements, student support arrangements, proposed study pattern, available research facilities 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

⁸ As per the Terms of Reference for the Collaborative Provision and Partnerships Committee, where meetings do not align with a partnership approval schedule, a scrutiny sub-group will be convened by the Chair to consider a proposal and provide the relevant recommendations to ASG.

existing expertise in both institutions to ensure the students can be supported at each stage of their research. Proposals will not normally be considered unless it can be demonstrated that sufficient student numbers are achievable to make the arrangement financially viable. Whilst the KDA will advise on the most appropriate model for collaboration, based on what the School and/or Faculty aim to achieve through partnership, in most cases it is expected that a Joint Supervision Arrangement would be an appropriate substitute to a Split Site PhD arrangement, especially where there are insufficient student numbers attached to a proposal to warrant the development of a Split Site PhD partnership.

For further information on the models of PGR partnerships and their requirements, please refer to the PGR Partnerships Framework.

2.24 The Split Site PhD Proposal Form should be supplemented by a Business Case that sets 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 the student, paying for supervision, supplying resources, facilities and support services, institutional visits etc, providing a clear indication of where the waived fee would be supplemented. The income to Keele will need to be set at a level to ensure that the University can meet its obligations as the awarding body to assure the quality of University awards. Tuition fees due to Keele may be arranged flexibly for each partnership and will be regulated by contract

2.25 The Split Site PhD Proposal Form should be scrutinised and supported⁹ by the Faculty PGR Committee before being submitted to the University Doctoral Academy Committee for approval. The University Doctoral Academy Committee 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. The University Doctoral Academy Committee 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 and a valuable addition to the University's collaborative provision, academic and research portfolios.

2.26 The Collaborative Provision and Partnerships Sub-Committee will not normally scrutinise PGR partnership proposals but will receive a record of all new Split Site PhD partnership proposals that have been approved by the University Doctoral Academy Committee.

g) PhD Franchise, Joint & Dual PhD Award Approval

2.27 For PhD Franchise, Joint and Dual PhD partnerships, the corresponding Faculty's Dean of Research and the Keele Doctoral Academy should first be consulted regarding any new potential proposals and will advise on the model of partnership, exploring whether alternative models may be more appropriate. If it is confirmed that there is scope to develop a formal proposal for either a PhD Franchise, Joint or Dual PhD arrangement, the Faculty Executive Dean should be consulted to ensure a proposal is endorsed in principle by the Faculty.

2.28 Once scope to further develop a formal proposal has been confirmed, a [PhD Franchise, Joint & Dual PhD Proposal Form](#) should be completed by the School and/or Faculty, to 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 institutions to ensure the students can be supported at each stage of their research.

⁹ In some circumstances where external constraints are such that scrutiny and approval are not able to be given in a suitable timeframe through the physical committee schedule, proposals may be reviewed digitally by the Faculty PGR Committee and for the University Doctoral Academy Committee, approved via Chairs Action and noted at the next available meeting.

Proposals will not normally be considered unless it can be demonstrated that sufficient student numbers are achievable to make the arrangement financially viable and secure.

2.29 It may be beneficial in some circumstances, for example large scale partnerships with cross-Faculty input, to establish a working group to meet regularly throughout the development of the partnership proposal, overseeing the development of the legal and due diligence investigations, the development of the Business Case and the development of the regulatory framework in which students will be expected to conduct their research and receive an award/s. Membership of such working groups will be determined based on the nature of the proposal and may fluctuate dependant on the agenda. It would normally include; the Faculty Executive Dean or Dean of Research or nominee (as chair), Head of relevant School(s), Head of Faculty Operations, KDA Director or nominee, Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct and Collaborative Provision Officer.

2.30 The PhD Franchise, Joint & Dual PhD Proposal Form, Business Case and Due Diligence should be scrutinised and supported by the Faculty PGR Committee and University Doctoral Academy Committee¹⁰ prior to submission to ASG for approval. Proposals will be presented to ASG by the Faculty Executive Dean and/or Pro Vice-Chancellor Research & Enterprise. ASG 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. ASG 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 and a valuable addition to the University's collaborative provision, academic and research portfolios.

2.31 Following approval by ASG, a legal agreement will be developed, coordinated by the corresponding Faculty in consultation with the QA Team and the KDA, and in liaison with the Project Assurance Team/Head of Legal, Governance and Compliance, or where necessary an external legal firm.

2.32 The Collaborative Provision and Partnerships Sub-Committee will not normally scrutinise PGR partnership proposals, but will receive a record of all new PhD Franchise, Joint and Dual PhD partnership proposals that have been approved by ASG.

h) Programme Approval

2.33 Where the new collaborative arrangement involves a new taught programme, either developed by Keele or by the partner or jointly by both parties, the new programme will undergo a programme approval process based on Keele's internal programme approval processes. 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 processes. Programme approval will be synchronised with partner approval wherever possible. Programmes offered in collaboration will always be considered as part of Approval Route 3 in accordance with the University's [Programme Approval Process](#). For more information and guidance on the programme approval process see the [Collaborative Provision Programme Approval Guidance](#).

2.34 Where a potential partner organisation 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 organisation has obtained the necessary PSRB validation 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, it has to be established prior to final approval by ASG whether the recognition or accreditation will be extended to the

¹⁰ In some circumstances where external constraints are such that scrutiny and approval are not able to be given in a suitable timeframe through the physical committee schedule, proposals may be reviewed digitally by the Faculty PGR Committee and the University Doctoral Academy Committee and noted at the next available meeting.

collaborative programme and if any action is required to meet these standards. Costs associated with this activity will be included in the Business Case.

i) Curriculum Mapping

2.35 For Guaranteed Articulation arrangements (classed as Collaborative Provision), a detailed curriculum mapping exercise, using the [Curriculum Mapping Template for Guaranteed Articulation](#) is required. The School will produce the mapping in liaison with the partner to establish how the feeder programme at the partner maps to the relevant levels of the destination programme at Keele which students will be exempted from. The mapping should demonstrate how and where students will meet the overall programme learning outcomes of their Keele award. Consideration will be given to the entrance requirements and relationship to subject benchmark statements to ensure that the academic standards of the overall award are maintained. Curriculum Mapping will be considered by School Education Committee (SEC) and approved by FEC and must be reviewed annually.

j) Contracts

2.36 Once final approval has been given by ASG, the University will then be able to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with the partner, which should be signed by the University's designated signatory.

2.37 The contract is a legally binding document which (i) sets out the detailed arrangements for the delivery of the programme, (ii) ensures that the University is in a position to comply with its regulatory obligations and (iii) manages the legal aspects of the partnership, including the financial conditions, library licensing arrangements and other assumptions underlying the Partnership's business case. For Split Site PhDs and Franchise, Joint and Dual PhD partnerships, each arrangement will be regulated by contracts between Keele and the partner institution/s to ensure that for each individual student, appropriate, robust, reliable and high-quality arrangements are in place for the duration of the research degree. Students will sign an independent learning agreement based on the content of the contract between the University and the partner/s, which will be attached to the student's record.

2.38 The contract must be agreed and signed before delivery of the programme can commence. The complex nature of collaborative provision partnerships means that the contract will often take several months to negotiate. It is therefore essential that adequate time is built into the project to allow for the development and negotiation of the contract.

2.39 The contract will be coordinated between the Project Assurance Team and/or the Head of Legal, Governance and Compliance/an external legal organisation, the Faculty and QA. The contract will, wherever possible, be based on a standard University template, which will be amended to reflect the individual partnership. The template is designed to be flexible to allow for contracts to be varied and expanded as the nature of the partnership evolves, for example by adding additional programmes or delivery sites.

k) Non-Collaborative Provision Arrangements

2.40 In some circumstances the University may choose to work with organisations that provide operational support in the delivery of a Keele University programme. These arrangements may include, but are not limited

to: offering physical facilities, providing student support services, technological resources/platforms, hosting aspects of a Keele programme.

2.41 In these instances a Contract for Services would normally be sufficient. Approval would not necessarily be carried out under the processes defined under this Code of Practice but ongoing oversight of such arrangements must be mapped out and described in the contract. The Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct will act as the final arbiter in all decisions as to whether a proposed arrangement is classed as collaborative provision.

3. The Management of Collaborative Provision Partnerships

a) Implementation & Preparation for Delivery

3.1 Following successful approval of a proposal 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 approval (where applicable and where it has not been possible to conduct this alongside partnership approval), the recruitment of teaching and where applicable, administrative staff, the development of marketing and student recruitment activities and any additional activities in relation to programme delivery.

Please refer to Section 3i) for the implementation expectations related to Split Site PhD arrangements, and Section 3j) for Joint/Dual award PhD arrangements.

b) The Operational Handbook

3.2 An Operational Handbook will normally to be compiled by the Collaborative Provision Officer with support from the leading Keele School. The Operational Handbook will be developed for each partnership 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 collaborative provision 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 collaborative provision arrangement.

3.3 The Collaborative Provision Officer will liaise with the partner, the Keele School and various Professional Services Teams to develop the Operational Handbook. The first Operational Handbook will be signed off by the Joint Steering Committee for the partnership, where possible, before teaching commences, and it will be updated annually by the Collaborative Provision Officer, the partner and the School. The Joint Steering Committee is responsible for monitoring the release of appropriate resources to ensure that the processes set out in the Operational Handbook can operate as described.

3.4 Occasionally, in liaison with a partner, a different format will be agreed in place of an Operational Handbook, such as a Staff Handbook or Framework Document. It is for the Joint Steering Committee to approve the first iteration of such a document provided it meets the aims set out above.

3.5 Where there is more than one School collaborating with (or proposing to collaborate with) the same partner, all Schools involved should contribute to the development of a single Operational Handbook. Operational Handbooks are not required for Guaranteed Articulation arrangements and are predominantly

developed for partnerships modelled on a Validation, Franchise, Joint and Dual Award and Co-Delivery arrangement. Schools and Professional Services should however ensure that there are suitable transition and induction arrangements in place for students progressing to the University from a Guaranteed Articulation arrangement.

c) Governance Arrangements

3.6 University Council is the governing body of the University with ultimate responsibility for safeguarding the University and, in particular, for the proper management and financial solvency of the institution. Major policy decisions, as well as corporate strategy, which includes major collaborative partnerships, are also subject to its approval. Senate, which advises Council on matters of academic strategy, is responsible for ensuring that the standards and quality of the University's collaborative provision are equivalent to those of the University's own internal programmes. Within the University committee structure, the following committees have been allocated particular responsibility in relation to collaborative provision:

3.7 Academic Strategy Group (ASG) on behalf of the University Executive Committee (UEC) is responsible for granting approval of collaborative provision partnerships, considering in detail all proposals for new collaborative partnerships and making an assessment, based on the evidence and analysis provided by other parts of the University, as to the suitability and strategic fit of the partner. ASG will receive for information a summary and any relevant partnership updates from CAP when required.

3.8 The Collaborative Provision and Partnerships Sub-Committee (CAP) is responsible for providing initial scrutiny of new proposals and will review all partnership proposals including the Partnership Proposal Form, Due Diligence Report, Business Case and Institutional Visit Report and make any recommendations (as necessary) to ASG. CAP will also receive regular partnership updates on every collaborative provision partnership, receiving updates on annual monitoring and Annual Strategic Performance Reviews and act as the main body for overseeing quality assurance and enhancement related activities, including all associated processes for collaborative provision.

3.9 For 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 for these and other types of collaborative provision and be set out in the legal agreement, based on the advice of the Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct.

Joint Steering Committee

3.10 A Joint Steering Committee is set up with each Franchise/Validation/Joint/Dual Award and Co-Delivery partner to provide strategic direction and liaison for the partnership and to ensure all programmes delivered under these partnerships are appropriately managed. The membership of the Joint Steering Committee will consist of senior members of staff from Keele and the partner and will normally include the Executive Dean of the relevant Faculty at the University, Faculty Internationalisation Director, the relevant Head(s) of School, the Link Tutor(s) and the Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct. Keele members of the Joint Steering Committee are responsible for escalating all issues requiring senior management attention to ASG. The Terms of Reference and membership of the Joint Steering Committee will be set out in the Operational Handbook for each partnership. Meetings are scheduled in advance and will likely take place via video-conferencing for most international partnerships. Joint Steering Committees may also be set up for other types of partnerships but 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 arrangements.

Joint Board of Studies

3.11 There will be a Joint Board of Studies in place for each partner or delivery site which will normally cover all Keele programmes taught at that campus. The Joint Board of Studies is the key forum for ongoing liaison between the Keele School and partner and will have within its remit academic matters and those relating to the student experience. It is responsible for discussions in relation to academic and pedagogical matters, consideration of annual reports, external examiner reports, issues relating to student recruitment, progression and achievement data, summaries of feedback from students and outcomes of other quality assurance processes. Many operational matters can also be dealt with through the Joint Board of Studies but if an issue requires more senior input or strategic oversight, it will be reported upwards to the Joint Steering Committee, or CAP or where necessary ASG in accordance with the responsibilities set out above. The membership of the Joint Board of Studies will normally consist of the Link Tutor(s) (the chair) and other such members of staff of Keele University as may be appropriate, such as academic or administrative staff from the School, representatives from Professional Services, staff of the Keele Institute for Innovation and Teaching Excellence or other Keele staff as identified by invitation of the Chair. The partner will normally be represented through the designated contact, a head of department, module tutors, and key administrators. The Terms of Reference and membership of the Joint Board of Studies will be set out in the Operational Handbook. Meetings are scheduled in advance with at least one meeting per academic year and where possible will take place face to face, usually on the premises of the partner where applicable.

Examination Board

3.12 Where the collaborative arrangement involves the award of University degrees and qualifications, the constitution of Boards of Examiners for collaborative provision should meet the requirements of [Regulation D.3](#) of the University's regulations. Examination Boards where award decisions at Level 6 or Level 7 are made will normally be chaired by the Executive Dean of the Faculty or the relevant Dean of Education to ensure independent senior oversight of the academic standards of partnership awards. Examination Board arrangements will be agreed prior to the commencement of the partnership and defined in the Operational Handbook. Wherever possible, collaborative provision should adhere to the main University calendar for examination boards.

Student Staff Voice Committee (SSVC)

3.13 There will be a forum at the partner institution to facilitate opportunities for student representatives to meet with partner staff and the Keele Link Tutor. The SSVC will normally meet at least twice per year, and at least one meeting would normally be arranged to coincide with a visit from the Keele Link Tutor. Meetings would normally be held at the campus where the students are located. The Keele Link Tutor is an ex officio member of the SSVC and may attend any meeting or may request that a meeting is held by video-conference between Keele and the partner. The partner SSVC may be based upon the good practice developed with the Keele Student Voice Representatives scheme or may use a local alternative scheme but this must reflect the spirit of partnership and transparency required by the UK Quality Code. The student liaison mechanism adopted by each partner will be set out in the Operational Handbook and publicised to students through a Student Handbook. Partner institutions need to ensure that for each programme:

- 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 or not taken;
- there is sufficiently wide dissemination within the academic areas of issues raised and to be raised and actions taken;
- the Student Union (or equivalent) in the partner institution is properly informed of activities relating to student representation on a yearly basis.

SSVC discussion of the student experience should include discussion of:

- academic matters (relating to any aspect of modules and programmes including their delivery and assessment); programme content (level, suitability, academic rigour etc);
- curriculum design and development (both module and programme);
- learning resources and programme materials;
- academic support, including library services as well as pastoral care and other forms of student support;
- the quality of information and documentation made available to students;
- recruitment, selection and admissions procedures;
- the quality of feedback.

d) Approval of Teaching Staff

3.14 Where academic staff at an approved partner are involved with the teaching and assessment of Keele programmes, each individual member of the teaching staff will require approval from Keele before they can commence in their role. The lead Keele School would normally be expected to approve individual teaching staff, ensuring that they are suitably experienced and qualified to teach on the programme. This will normally require a review of staff CVs but may also require involvement in the recruitment and selection process by the School as well. Typically, partner staff delivering and/or assessing Keele programmes would be expected to be qualified to the level above the one they are delivering/assessing and have the necessary subject-specific expertise to provide high quality teaching.

3.15 The approval process will be repeated annually to approve any new staff teaching on the programme and to confirm the continuation of those already approved. This process has to be completed every year before they commence teaching. Approval would normally be given by the Head of School, in consultation with the Link Tutor. When approved, partner staff will normally be granted the title of 'Associate Tutor' which entitles them to access various Keele systems and Keele online learning resources, including possible staff development opportunities. Where the Link Tutor is asked to contribute to the appointment process at the partner institution, approval for the new appointments is still required.

e) Induction and Staff Development

3.16 The University is committed to assisting with the development of staff at both Keele and its partners. Link Tutors have a key role to play in the training of staff at partner institutions on key University regulations, policies, systems and processes and are therefore encouraged during every visit to the partner to include an

element of staff training and provide any updates on new University regulations and policies. Academic staff at Keele and partner institutions are also encouraged to enhance their scholarly activities together and may consider establishing joint research, staff exchange programs and other potential opportunities for personal development.

3.17 Staff at partner institutions involved with the delivery of Keele awards may also be invited to attend events and courses offered by the Keele Institute for Innovation and Teaching Excellence (KIITE) subject to the availability of places and payment of a fee if appropriate. The University may also offer other online courses to support further development of partnership staff's professional practice and will endeavour to release its own staff to undertake potential development opportunities offered by a partner.

Further information on how to access the opportunities available to staff at the partner will be outlined in the Operational Handbook for each partnership.

f) Monitoring and Approval of Public Information

3.18 All promotional materials for programmes devised and used by the partner institution must be designed in keeping with Keele's corporate identity and approved by Keele prior to their use. Approval can only be provided by the Associate Director of Global Recruitment and Access or their nominee. The approval of all material directly connected to the academic programme for teaching purposes is normally delegated to the School and is the responsibility of the Head of School or nominee.

3.19 Promotional materials which require approval include, but are not limited to, advertisements, prospectuses, brochures, leaflets, folders, posters, webpages and any other form of printed or electronic communication which:

- refer to the partner institution's connection with the University;
- are used to recruit students or staff to the collaborative programme;
- are used to attract funding or other support from public or private sector sources;
- are used to inform the general public.

g) The Link Tutor

3.20 For each collaborative programme in its portfolio, the lead School appoints a Link Tutor to act as the main contact for that programme. Where a School is linked to more than one collaborative programme delivered by a particular partner organisation, discretion may be used regarding whether there should be a single Link Tutor for all programmes, or Link Tutors appointed for each individual programme. Equally, if a partner institution has collaborative arrangements with more than one School at Keele, it should be agreed at the outset if this arrangement merits one or more Link Tutors. Such arrangements will then be set out in the Operational Handbook as an obligation on the University. It is the responsibility of the School, in its contributions to the Business Case for the collaboration, to identify a suitably experienced member of staff as Link Tutor and factor in an appropriate allocation of time for the Link Tutor to carry out their role. Schools and the member of staff appointed as a Link Tutor should work in accordance with the [Collaborative Provision School Responsibilities and Link Tutor Role](#) guidance. It is not possible to specify a generic workload allocation for Link Tutors as much will depend on the size, nature and geographical location of the collaboration. However, Schools should be aware that even small collaborations, which may not generate much income, will make certain demands on the Link Tutor which cannot be scaled down any further. Therefore this commitment

should be carefully considered by the School prior to entering into any new collaboration and reviewed regularly. Where the partner is located overseas, the expectation to carry out at least one visit per annum should also be taken into consideration.

3.21 The Collaborative Provision Officer will introduce each new Link Tutor to the role and establish regular dialogue to update them on developments in the University's management of collaborative provision, operational changes, and new or revised external guidance. Link Tutors should also discuss good practice and concerns with the Collaborative Provision Officer.

3.22 The Link Tutor will work closely with the designated contact(s) at the partner institution. The designated contact will usually be an academic member of staff or a member of the management team who has been appointed by the partner institution as the main liaison person for the University. Designated contacts frequently teach on the collaborative programme(s) and/or carry out other important roles, such as examinations officer or academic conduct officer for the provision at the partner. The Operational Handbook will contain the name of the designated contact as well as other key contacts involved in the partnership.

h) Student Feedback & Engagement

3.23 The University values the student voice and believes that it is important to provide opportunities for students to feedback to the University and take up an active role in their learning, regardless of where and how they are taught. Therefore, in addition to the Student Staff Voice Committees, partners are expected to collect feedback from students following teaching on each module and will have in place mechanisms for acting upon such feedback and informing students of action taken. It is the responsibility of partner institutions to summarise student feedback within the annual monitoring of the programme. Expectations on student feedback and other forms of engagement will be outlined in the Operational Handbook for each partnership.

i) Split Site PhDs

3.24 Flexibility will apply with regard to the time spent by students at Keele and the level of tuition fee payable to Keele. The minimum period of residence at Keele should be no less than 12 months in total but which could be divided up into discontinuous periods, subject to visa considerations. For time spent at Keele, normally full applicable fees are payable to Keele. The level of tuition fee payable to Keele for other periods would be determined on a case by case basis and be fully reflected in the Business Case which is put forward for approval.

3.25 Students will be allocated two lead supervisors, one from each institution. The supervisory arrangements in place for the student should follow the expectations of the University's [PGR Code of Practice](#) and good practice set out in the [Research Degree Supervisor Handbook](#). Where the partner institution does not have suitable supervisor training provision, supervisors will be expected to complete the Keele online supervisor training.

3.26 Students will undertake research training either at Keele or at the partner institution and follow the normal stages of a Keele research degree, including progression points, as prescribed in the PGR Code of Practice.

3.27 Thesis and viva arrangements will follow the requirements set out in the Keele PGR 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.

3.28 There should be a separate learning agreement for each student reflecting the provisions agreed in the legal agreement between the University and the partner/s with regard to the regulatory framework in which a student will conduct their research, and details on progression points, examinations, training and supervision.

j) Joint & Dual PhDs

3.29 For Joint and Dual PhD arrangements specific requirements must be considered as set out below. Flexibility will apply with regard to the time spent by students at Keele and the level of tuition fee payable to Keele. The minimum period of residence at Keele should be no less than 12 months in total but which could be divided up into discontinuous periods, subject to visa considerations.

3.30 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 make reference to the other institution.

3.31 The regulatory framework for Joint PhD arrangements will be based on a bespoke set of regulations specific to the programme 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 institution will implement their own regulations.

3.32 For Joint PhD arrangements a supervisor must be appointed at each institution. For Viva examinations an Internal Examiner might be nominated at each institution with a joint decision made on one External candidate. For Dual PhD arrangements each institution will coordinate its own separate examination arrangements. Students will need to complete both in order to be awarded a degree.

3.33 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 be maintained and students would need to fulfil both sets of requirements.

3.34 The legal agreement will set out clearly the expectations of each partner and the relevant processes with regard to quality assurance, standards, examinations, training and supervision, student support and the regulatory framework. There should be a separate learning agreement for each student reflecting the provisions agreed in the legal agreement between the University and the partner/s with regard to the regulatory framework in which a student will conduct their research, and details on progression points, examinations, training and supervision.

k) Certification and Awards

3.35 The production of certificates and transcripts for collaborative programmes remains the responsibility of the University. All certificates and transcripts (and, where applicable, the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR)) are printed and issued by the University apart from Dual/Joint Awards where the process for producing and issuing the 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.

4. Monitoring and Review of Collaborative Provision Partnerships

a) Annual Monitoring

4.1 The University adopts an annual approach to partnership monitoring and review. All collaborative provision partners are required to undertake an Annual Partnership Review during July - October, reflecting on the recently completed academic year. Using the [Annual Partnership Review Form](#), partners will be asked to comment on programme delivery, the student experience, operational issues affecting the partnership and areas of effective practice. The reporting template and relevant data will be sent to the partner in July each year by the Collaborative Provision Officer, with the expectation that the partner completes the report by October.

The guiding principles for the Annual Partnership Review process are as follows:

- to review the student learning experience in order to provide an assurance to the University that the programme delivered at/by the partner meets sector-recognised standards;
- to identify and reflect on any concerns arising from external examiner reports, student, staff and stakeholder feedback, and quantitative data on areas such as entry criteria, academic attainment and student retention;
- to assess the overall performance of the partnership with regards to recruitment, student achievement, staff resource and development, and that the partnership continues to meet its original aims, identifying any causes for concern and using the review to drive forward improvements where required.

4.2 The relevant Keele School will be asked to consider the Annual Partnership Review report and feed any actions arising for the School from the report into their School Action Plan, which should be updated following the Annual Programme Review meetings for all 'home' provision.

4.3 Faculties, with input from Schools and Link Tutors, are required to complete an annual Strategic Performance Review of all approved collaborative provision partnerships on an annual basis which focuses on key metrics and updated Business Case information. Between September and December, each Faculty with active collaborative provision partnerships will be required to undertake a Strategic Performance Review using the [Annual Strategic Performance Review Form](#), providing an analysis of the continued strategic benefits and risks of the partnership. The Strategic Performance Reviews will be considered by CAP in January each year for consideration.

4.4 Split Site PhD, PhD Franchise, Joint and Dual PhD arrangements will be monitored during their period of contract by the Faculty PGR Committee and University Doctoral Academy Committee.

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

b) The Partnership Register

4.6 The University maintains a formal register of all current ASG approved collaborative provision partners. Additional databases are maintained by the Project Assurance Team for MoU's entered into, and other non-collaborative partnerships. Updates on the register are submitted to CAP and other committees as required for consideration.

c) External Examiners

4.7 The external examining system is a key element for setting, maintaining and assuring academic quality and standards of Keele awards. The lead School is responsible for nominating a suitable external examiner for their collaborative provision programmes. Nominations will be scrutinised by QAS before submission to the Senate for formal approval. For franchise arrangements, where possible, the same external examiner or examiner team who examines the programme at Keele should be appointed to examine the franchised programme. External examining procedures for programmes offered under collaborative provision should be equivalent to those used by the University for its internal programmes as set out in the University's [Code of Practice on External Examining](#). Any specific procedures, powers and responsibilities of the external examiners should be specified in the Operational Handbook for each partnership.

4.8 External examiners for Franchised, Validated, Joint/Dual Award and Co-Delivery provision would be expected to visit the partner at least once during their term of office, preferably in their first year, to familiarise themselves with the specific context in which the programme is delivered and to facilitate discussions with local staff and students. Alternatively, the School may arrange for the external examiner to meet with the academic team and students at the partner via video-conference where travel is not possible.

4.9 The QA Team will disseminate external examiner reports to the partner. Where external examiner reports comment on both Keele-based and partner-based provision, the partner may be sent only the relevant sections of the report. Link Tutors are encouraged to discuss external examiner findings with partners, usually during visits or via the Joint Board of Studies meetings where an overview can be presented. Students studying on Franchise, Validation, Joint/Dual Award and Co-Delivery provision are able to access external examiner reports through the Keele University website, using their Keele logins. This should be communicated via the Student Handbook so that students are aware of the availability of such reports.

d) Periodic Review

4.10 All collaborative provision partnerships are subject to a periodic review, which is normally aligned with the expiration of the legal agreement. At the start of each academic year, the Collaborative Provision Officer will establish whether an existing agreement is due to expire in the proceeding calendar year ahead. The Faculty and School will be asked at this point to establish whether a partnership should be renewed and on what terms the renewal should proceed.

4.11 A periodic review will be scheduled 6 months prior to the contract expiration, which will culminate in a report generated for ASG to make a final decision as to whether a partnership should be renewed. The report will be presented to ASG at least 4 months prior to a new cohort starting to ensure that, should it be decided that a partnership should not proceed, no further cohorts are enrolled and the teach out and partnership withdrawal process is conducted without unnecessarily extending the process.

4.12 An initial periodic review will normally take place after 5 years of the partnership starting, depending on the length of the legal agreement. The process is flexible and each review will be designed based on a risk-based approach. The process will be organised in an appropriate way which recognises the complexity of the partnership and the nature and scale of the provision. Broadly, the periodic review will require a full panel event chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor Education, which will make a recommendation to ASG within the report generated from the findings of the event. As part of this event, Schools will be asked to complete the

[Periodic Partner and Partnership Review Form](#), which will provide the panel with the School’s analysis of the partnership being reviewed. The final decision on the format and scale of the review event will rest with the Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct.

Periodic Review of Collaborative Provision (indicative)

| Type of Arrangement | Recommended Periodic Review Process |
|--|--|
| Articulation | FEC/CAP Committee Scrutiny |
| Co-Delivery of Keele Award | FEC/ASG Committee Scrutiny |
| Dual Award (<i>Inc Dual PhD</i>) | Full Panel Review with ASG Scrutiny |
| Franchise (<i>Inc PhD Franchise</i>) | Full Panel Review with ASG Scrutiny |
| Joint Award (<i>Inc Joint PhD</i>) | Full Panel Review with ASG Scrutiny |
| Validation | Full Panel Review with ASG Scrutiny |
| Offsite Delivery/ Flying faculty | FEC/ASG Committee Scrutiny |
| Split Site PhDs | Faculty PGR Committee and University Doctoral Academy Committee Scrutiny |

4.13 Regardless of how the review is conducted, in order for an existing collaborative 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 command the support of senior managers in the University and from the partner organisation;
- the academic, financial and legal status of the partner is still appropriate and sustainable;
- the programme will continue to meet the appropriate academic standards and offer students the learning opportunities necessary to achieve them;
- the arrangements for the partnership will continue to enable the University to discharge its responsibilities for the academic standards of awards and the quality of the student learning experience;
- student attainment is broadly in line with expectations;
- where there are requirements in relation to PSRB recognition or in-country approvals, these will continue to be met;
- a new Business Case can demonstrate that the partnership is financially sustainable;
- the ongoing legal, financial and organisational stability of an existing partner and the regulatory environment in which it operates can be assured.

e) Expanding Provision

4.14 In some cases a Faculty may wish to expand the portfolio of programmes covered under an existing collaborative provision partnership, with the aim of introducing new provision, either within the same subject area or within an entirely different one. As such, expansion of an existing partnership agreement may be led by the Faculty currently in partnership or by another Faculty.

4.15 In the event that a Faculty wishes to expand delivery with an existing collaborative partner, a single stage approval process will suffice. A [Partnership Expansion Proposal Form](#) should be completed by the proposing Faculty and submitted to the Collaborative Provision Officer, alongside a renewed Business Case (which may

be an expanded version of the original Business Case) for the new proposal, which should be completed by the relevant Head of Faculty Operations. The Partnership Expansion Proposal Form will request details on the strategic rationale for the proposal and the potential resource and risk implications. Should it be deemed necessary to undertake additional due diligence work, this will be reviewed by the Collaborative Provision Officer and the Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct and a decision communicated back to the Faculty as to what due diligence is required. The form, once complete, should be signed off by the proposing Faculty Executive Dean. The Collaborative Provision Officer will review the information with the Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct and circulate the form to relevant Professional Services Departments where necessary prior to submitting the Partnership Expansion Proposal Form and Business Case to ASG for approval.

4.16 The Partnership Expansion Proposal Form and Business Case will be submitted to ASG either by the Faculty or by the Collaborative Provision Officer and will be presented by the proposing Faculty Executive Dean. Following the ASG decision, the Collaborative Provision Officer will confirm whether the proposal has been approved. A programme approval/modification processes will then be initiated where relevant, as set out in the University's [Programme Approval Process](#). Following approval, the Collaborative Provision Officer will work with the Project Assurance Team and/or the Head of Legal, Governance and Compliance/an external legal organisation to amend the existing contract.

4.17 In cases where the programme(s) remain the same but the Faculty wishes to or is required to change the nature of the partnership, for example from a Franchise arrangement to a Dual Award, a modified version of the expansion process set out above will apply. The Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct will advise on the approval route for such changes on a case by case basis.

f) Cause for Concern Procedure

4.18 The annual monitoring procedures set out above ensure that, once approved, programmes offered in collaboration maintain acceptable quality and standards. In the event that there is a serious concern regarding the quality or standards of the provision at a collaborative provision partner, the University has a [Cause for Concern Protocol](#) to manage potential risks to quality and academic standards. The protocol operates on a basis of transparency and openness. It is a key principle that the approach has to be phased and proportionate, 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.

4.19 The protocol may be invoked by the Link Tutor, an external examiner, a student or another stakeholder where there is reason to believe that the normal governance arrangements set out in section 3c 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 Collaborative Provision Officer will work with the relevant School or Faculty to gather the evidence leading to the concern, which may be a highly critical external examiner report, 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 retention, or cohort size not sufficient to sustain quality of student experience. This will be presented to the Executive Dean and the Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct. Together, they will determine a timescale for the key stages in the cause for concern process, including deadlines for an improvement plan. This is communicated to the partner by the Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct and flagged at CAP, which will monitor the proposed improvement plan and receive a report from the School/Faculty.

4.20 The exact nature of the cause for concern may be such that an inspection visit to the partner institution either by external examiners, the Faculty or on behalf of CAP may be required. This may be at the early stages of the investigation of the concern and/or to confirm the remedial action taken by the partner institution.

g) Termination and Withdrawal of Collaborative Provision

4.21 Either partner may initiate the termination of a partnership and/or programme, subject to the termination clauses set out in the contract. This may be triggered by changes in the regulatory operating environment, in the levels of demand for the provision, in its financial viability or due to irreconcilable differences over the management and operation of the partnership. All decisions to terminate or withdraw by the University require prior approval from ASG.

4.22 Upon termination of the agreement, 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 registered. Such teach-out arrangements will be determined by agreement between Keele University and the partner and will require approval from the relevant FEC and CAP (using the [Partnership Teach Out Proposal Form](#)) before being recorded as a formal variation to the main contract. 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 contract being terminated:

- The date at which the contract, and therefore the partnership, should end;
- Confirmation of the final recruitment point;
- Confirmation of who will communicate the decision to all internal and external stakeholders, including current students and applicants, and amend marketing communications;
- A commitment to provide all enrolled students with every opportunity to complete their programme of study as approved wherever possible;
- Agreement by the partner institution to maintain appropriate academic standards for students remaining on the course until the maximum registration date;
- Teaching out responsibilities and arrangements.

4.23 Termination letters are normally sent by the designated University signatory following ASG approval. Contract variation letters are also signed by the appropriate designated University signatory.

4.24 Where a contract is of limited duration with a clear expiry date and where it is intended not to seek renewal of a collaborative arrangement at the time of the expiry of an existing agreement, and this constitutes the end of the University's relationship with the partner organisation, the Faculty/School is responsible for communicating this to the partner and, using the Partnership Teach out Proposal Form as above, seek approval from FEC and CAP for the proposed teach-out arrangements.