

Birmingham City University

**Academic Partnerships
Handbook**

First Edition

Academic Year 2021/2022

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Foreword

The University is committed to high quality UK and transnational education academic partnerships in fulfilment of its Strategic Mission and Vision in synergy with the mission and vision of each academic partner. The University's aims is to widen educational and employment opportunities, supporting the academic experience of students wherever they are located and the communities it serves.

The Academic Partnership Handbook compiles the University structures, governance, policies and principles that govern collaborative, academic partnership courses approved by Collaborative Partnerships Committee.

The University adopts a risk-based approach to academic partnership supporting its Strategic Mission and Vision, addressing risk through governance structures, due diligence and quality assurance processes. During the Coronavirus pandemic the University has worked to assure quality and standards of academic partnership courses, providing support for academic partners and students to complete their course of study in a timely manner.

A Handbook providing a compendium of associated operational forms and detailed procedural guidance for academic partnerships will be published during 2021/2022 by APU.

The University's extant processes of governance, academic oversight, course approval, course delivery, regulations, assessment, external examining, monitoring and review apply equally to academic partnership course delivery. The policy statements within this Academic Partnerships Handbook are additional considerations and requirements for cross-institutional academic partnerships, leading to University award or credit.

The Academic Partnerships Handbook should be read in conjunction with the University's Academic Regulations 2021/2022 and Quality Assurance Handbook which apply to all University courses.

In a time of continual global change and challenge we hope that you will find this Handbook a helpful resource. We value your comments and feedback and will address feedback received in review and updating of the Handbook, for publication of subsequent editions.

In order to provide feedback please contact ApprenticeshipsandPartnershipUnit@bcu.ac.uk

If you have any questions regarding the guidance contained in the Handbook please do not hesitate to contact APU via ApprenticeshipsandPartnershipUnit@bcu.ac.uk.

Section 1: University Oversight and Management of Academic Partnerships

Academic Partnerships and Collaborative Provision

1. The University in line with the QAA UK Quality Code Advice and Guidance section on Partnerships, defines an Academic Partnership as:

“An arrangement between two or more organisations to deliver aspects of teaching, learning, assessment and student support. It refers to collaborative arrangements involving students and/or awards which include those involving guaranteed progression and sharing of services. Partnership arrangements may apply to the delivery of whole courses of study or to elements of courses, individual modules, or self-contained components of study.

Alternative sites and contexts for learning or assessment, or specialist support, resources or facilities for learning, may be provided, for example, by organisations offering work-based or placement learning opportunities, or employers supporting employees on higher education courses where the workplace is used as a learning environment. They may operate either within the UK or transnationally and include, for example, different modes of delivery such as online, validation arrangements, franchised courses, branch campuses, multiple awards, apprenticeships and provision by ‘embedded colleges’ of integrated foundation courses.”

2. Academic Partnership provision provides learning opportunities leading to the award of University academic credit or award, delivered, assessed or supported through an arrangement with one or more organisations other than the University.
3. The following partnerships are operated by the University. The University uses the term “Academic Partnerships” to describe a range of strategic partnerships, in the UK and internationally, where students are studying for a University award or credit. This includes but is not limited to: validated and franchised course delivery models, and dual awards. In addition articulation and progression agreements provide approved flexible routes for applicants to study at the University with recognition of prior learning as appropriate. University Branch Campus arrangements are set out in a separate handbook. Research Partnerships arrangements are also detailed separately.
4. The University maintains and reviews, via Collaborative Partnerships Committee, three registers of approved:
 - i) Transnational Education Provision;
 - ii) UK Partnership Provision; and
 - iii) Articulation and Progression Arrangements.
5. The University reports to the Office for Students (OfS) on all new academic partnership arrangements and significant changes to partnerships via the Apprenticeship and Partnership Unit (APU) and the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic.

The University’s Academic Partnership Typology

6. The University’s Collaborative Partnerships Committee (CPC) agreed the following typology for the classification and management of University academic partnerships. This typology is subject to periodic review of CPC.

- 6.1 **Franchise:** the student contract sits with the University and the curriculum is the University's intellectual property leading to a university award or credit upon successful completion. Minor variation of course assessment, or content, is permitted to support local requirements.
- 6.2 **Validated (University Intellectual Property):** the student contract sits with the partner institution and the curriculum is the University's intellectual property university leading to a University award or credit upon successful completion. There may be minor variation of the assessment or content to support local requirements.
- 6.3 **Validated (Partner Intellectual Property):** the student contract sits with the partner and the curriculum is the partner's intellectual property. The course is wholly owned by the partner, developed to meet local requirements, and is validated by the University to lead to a University award upon successful completion;
- 6.4 **Dual Award:** a jointly developed course leading to two awards of both the partner and University, with each institution providing separate award certification. The University's approach to the approval and delivery of Dual Awards is set out in the University's Dual and Joint Awards Policy;
- 6.5 **Joint Award:** a jointly developed course between the University and partner institution, leads to a single award and certification of the University and partner institution. The University's approach to the approval and delivery of Joint Awards is set out in the University's Dual and Joint Awards Policy;
- 6.6 **Apprenticeship:** the apprentice is in employment and is registered by the employer to complete apprenticeship training with the University mapped to an approved apprenticeship standard. The University offers apprenticeships at level 6 and 7, except in the Faculty of Health, Education and Life Sciences (HELS), where level 5 apprenticeships are offered. Apprenticeship policies and advice are offered separately to this Handbook and a compilation of policy in a University Apprenticeship Policy Handbook is planned;
- 6.7 **Work-based Learning (including Flexible Work-Based Learning Provision):** Work-based learning involves learning for work, and/or through and at work. It consists of planned opportunities for learning designed to meet an identified workplace need for employees to develop knowledge, skills and professional behaviours. The University works closely with employers closely to assess workforce development needs in the planning, design and delivery of the provision.
- 6.8 **BCUIC Embedded College:** BCUIC is a private organisation and part of the Navitas Group, operating from University premises, preparing and supporting international students for study upon University Higher Education programmes;
- 6.9 **University Branch Campus:** The University currently has a single local, branch campus the UAE Campus operating in the United Arab Emirates. This University branch campus is distinct from TNE provision where students are located with approved independent, partner institutions. All University Branch Campus approvals are approved by Academic Board and the University's Board of Governors. University Branch Campus arrangements are described separately. The student contract sits with the University.
- 6.10 **Articulation Agreement:** A process whereby all students who satisfy the academic criteria of a course delivered by an independent organisation are automatically entitled, on academic grounds, to be admitted with advanced standing to a University course. These arrangements are subject to a formal agreement between the University and the partner and, normally involve, credit accumulation and transfer so that credit achieved for

the approved study at the partner, is transferred to contribute to a specified award of the University (as APL). Students must also satisfy the general requirements for admission and enrolment by the University if they subsequently commence a University course.

Students' contractual arrangement is with the partner whilst undertaking the partner course and award, and with the University, once the student is enrolled on the University course.

These agreements are administered by the University's International Office which provides separate guidance. Similarly, the International Office administers progression and admission agreements setting out international admission requirements to University courses which do not involve recognition of credit for non-university awards. Governance and quality assurance oversight rests with CPC.

- 6.11 **School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT):** ITT providers are accredited by the Secretary State of Education. School Centred providers for initial training operate under an ITT provider partner and are not a legal entity in their own right. The Department for Education (DfE) provides regulation and principles for the management of SCITTs which are subject to Ofsted monitoring and inspection.
- 6.12 **Flying Faculty:** Flying faculty arrangements operate for University awards, fully or in part delivery, where University staff members directly deliver learning and teaching within partnership arrangements at partner facilities. These arrangements are specified within the academic partnership contractual arrangements.

The Development and Approval of Joint and Dual Awards Policy

Introduction

7. The University adheres to the following principles, in its work with collaborative partners, to deliver University awards and/or credit:
- i) Retention by the University of the ultimate responsibility for the quality of student learning opportunities and academic standards; and
 - ii) Recognition of the importance of building the capacity of partner institutions for the management of quality and standards.
8. For Dual and Joint awards, the University retains individual responsibility for ensuring that the academic standards and quality of student learning opportunities for its award are maintained, *irrespective of where and by whom they are delivered*.

Definition of Dual and Joint Awards

9. The University adopts the following definitions of Dual and Joint Awards:
- i) A **Dual Award** refers to an arrangement under which the University, together with another awarding body, provide a single jointly delivered programme (or programmes) leading to separate awards (and separate certification) being granted by both awarding bodies.
 - ii) A **Joint Award** refers to an arrangement under which the University collaborates with one or more degree-awarding bodies to provide a programme leading to a

single award made jointly by both, or all, participants. A single certificate or document (signed by the competent authorities) attests to successful completion of this jointly delivered programme, replacing the separate institutional or national qualifications.

Specific Considerations for the Development of Joint Awards

10. In view of the unique challenges and potential risks posed to the University's academic standards by the delivery of Joint awards, where the University may be considered to be 'pooling' its degree awarding powers with another awarding institution, additional considerations will apply to the approval of such awards by the University.
11. Approval by the University of a Joint programme and award, will include the additional considerations detailed in this section, when the proposal is considered through the University's prevailing due diligence and collaborative approval processes.
12. The development of Joint awards will only be considered for initial approval by the University's Portfolio Approval Committee (PAC), of the business case for development, where the following criteria are satisfied, that:
 - i) The University's due diligence process has been fully completed for PAC consideration and includes specific reference to the legal capacity of the University and proposed partner to grant academic awards jointly (particularly where this involves pooling or combining awarding powers granted within different legal jurisdictions) and to enter into an agreement to deliver a joint programme and award;
 - ii) In the case of transnational provision, confirmation that the proposal to develop a Joint award is founded upon a national regulatory requirement for the potential partner to do so, and necessary local, or governmental approval, has been received. Any consequences for prospective students, drawn from jurisdictions where there may be limited recognition of the proposed joint award, must also be clarified in the proposal to PAC;
 - iii) In the case of transnational provision, the national quality assurance arrangements should be stable, resilient and consistent (e.g. the national quality assurance agency/body is formally recognised by the QAA);
 - iv) The proposed partner has an existing, long term and successful relationship with the University and has been assessed as capable of providing a stable partnership for the governance, delivery and student experience of joint awards;
 - v) The proposal for a joint award is the outcome of a distinctive educational programme that the University and proposed partner are unable to offer individually outside of the proposed partnership, and is based on a fully articulated proposal supporting the case for its development;
 - vi) The learning experience is innovative and will be enhanced by genuinely joint development and programme delivery;
 - vii) The programme proposal is joint in all aspects, including equal contribution to the development, day-to day management and decision-making in relation to the programme and award;

- viii) Mutual quality assurance arrangements are specified, detailing how the standard quality assurance and governance requirements of the University will be met. Arrangements for the provision of clear and accurate programme material must also be specified; and
 - ix) Progression of the proposal to the University's institutional and programme approval process stages, may only occur once PAC has confirmed i) to viii) above in relation to the proposal. A full meeting of PAC is required to confirm approval of the proposal; approval by Chair's Action will not be permitted.
13. Evidence demonstrating how the above criteria are satisfied must be included within the Faculty's submission to PAC.

Joint and Award Characteristics and Requirements

Governance and Academic Oversight

14. Specific governance arrangements must be approved by the University and proposed partner, together with the operational procedures specific to the award of the qualification. Day-to-day programme management must be undertaken jointly and the processes by which this is undertaken are to be set out and agreed as part of the University's approval processes.
15. The joint award qualification must be jointly overseen by the University and partner awarding body. This will be managed by a joint board of studies, established at the point of approval, and which will be accountable to the University's Academic Board and the parallel highest academic authority of the partner institution. The responsibilities of the Joint Board of Studies include approval of any changes to the programme, assessment strategies, appointment of examiners (including external examiners) and proposals for any changes to regulations.
16. Decisions of the Board of Studies require approval by the University through its prevailing academic governance procedures. The University and partner will maintain joint oversight of the academic standards of the award, through the operational academic decision making structures set out at the point of initial approval. There must be no delegation of the University's responsibilities for the oversight of academic standards and the quality of education provided.

Academic Regulations Governing Joint Awards

17. The University and proposed partner degree-awarding bodies will jointly determine the academic regulations that will govern the award of the joint qualification. In certain circumstances bespoke regulations may be agreed and approved by the University and partner, ensuring that the academic standards of the University and partner degree-awarding body will be secured. The requirements of the University may be exceeded in certain instances, to take account of a particular partner's requirements, but may never be compromised. The specific regulations governing the award require approval by Academic Regulations and Policy Committee (ARPC) and Academic Board.

The Approval of a Joint Award Programme

18. A Joint Award programme will be approved through a single approval process involving representation from the University and partner awarding body, including the approval of all programme modules. The standard approval processes of the University must operate,

with additionality as required by the partner awarding body. The University retains responsibility for determining whether the proposed programme holistically delivers and tests programme outcomes at the appropriate level for the award. This includes detailed consideration of the assessment strategy. The University maintains oversight of the academic standards of the programme at the point of approval and in delivery.

Assessment Strategy

19. The University will be responsible for the assessment of modules of the programme that it delivers. A holistic view of the assessment strategy is taken at the point of approval and, in delivery, by the Joint Board of Studies that oversees the programme. In particular, a decision is made about whether a single marking scheme will be adopted and a single set of assessment regulations. These must be agreed in line with University and partner requirements at the point of programme approval and must adhere, wherever practically possible, to the University's standard assessment regulations.

Examination and Assessment Boards

20. A joint, bespoke, examination board will be established to oversee progression through the programme and final award of a qualification. Assessment decisions are taken by the examination board, which conforms to the requirements of the University and partner awarding body. The decisions of the Joint Examination and Assessment Board require approval, through the University's assessment approval procedures for award outcomes, in force at the time of consideration. The partner awarding body requirements for approval of assessment decisions, made by examination boards, will also be observed by the University.

External Examining

21. The University's requirements for external examination of the award must be observed and there will be consideration and agreement of any additional requirements to satisfy the requirements of the partner awarding body. Joint or dual external examiner appointments may be considered through the University's standing external examiner approval process. The University's external examining arrangements apply to individual programme modules and also, holistically, to the award of the joint qualification.

Annual Monitoring and Periodic Review

22. The University agrees the monitoring and review procedures to be adopted to satisfy requirements of the University. This may involve additionality but will not compromise the minimum requirements of the University's Annual Monitoring and Periodic Review processes, which will operate for the Joint Award. All outcomes from annual monitoring and periodic review will be reported, via the University's standard processes, and the outcomes shared with the partner institution.

Award Certification and Transcripts

23. On successful completion of a Joint Award programme, a student receives a single award certificate and transcript, which lists the title of the qualification, as recognised in all of the legal frameworks of the University and partner awarding body. Where a single certificate is awarded for a Joint Award the University will retain production of all award certification agreeing the processes for the secure storage and usage of the partner institution logo, holographs and authorising signatures.

Specific Considerations and Requirements for the Development of Dual Awards

Characteristics of Dual Awards

24. Each award within the Dual award programme has a separate awarding body but, two award components, which form a single programme that may require some elements of joint management and oversight. A Dual award programme is therefore developed with two subsets of learning outcomes and assessment criteria, to achieve two independent qualifications.

Due Diligence and Initial Approval by Portfolio Approval Committee (PAC)

25. A full meeting of PAC is required to confirm approval of the proposal for a Dual award. Approval by Chair's Action will not be permitted. The following criteria will be considered by PAC, that:
- i) The University's due diligence processes have been fully completed, during which there has been specific consideration, of the legal capacity of the University and proposed partner to enter into an agreement to deliver a dual award programme;
 - ii) In the case of transnational provision, there is confirmation that there is no bar in the relevant jurisdiction, to the development and delivery of a dual award qualification programme and that all required local approvals have been received;
 - iii) In the case of transnational provision, the applicable national quality assurance arrangements are stable, resilient and consistent to support dual award programme delivery;
 - iv) Sufficient additionality is demonstrated within the proposed programme to warrant the granting of dual awards to students, on successful completion of the programme;
 - v) The proposed partner has been assessed as capable of providing stable management, staffing and resource arrangements for the governance, delivery and student experience of the programme leading to dual awards;
 - vi) Quality assurance arrangements are specified in detail, concerning how the standard quality assurance and governance requirements of the University will be met. Arrangements for the provision and approval of clear, consistent and accurate programme material must also be specified. The University must retain approval of all publicity material;
 - vii) Progression of the proposal to the University's institutional and programme approval process stages, may only occur once PAC has duly confirmed approval of the proposal and that due diligence has been completed; and
 - viii) Evidence demonstrating how the additional criteria for the dual award programme are satisfied, must be included within the Faculty's submission for approval of the programme.

Governance and Academic Oversight

26. The University's extant processes of governance, academic oversight, programme approval, programme delivery, regulations, assessment, external examining, monitoring

and review apply equally to Dual Awards. The statements within this policy are additional considerations.

27. Specific governance arrangements must be approved by the University and proposed partner, together with the operational procedures specific to the award of dual qualifications. Normally some aspects of day-to-day programme management are undertaken jointly. The processes by which this operates to effectively manage the student experience of the programme, should be set out and agreed as part of the University's approval processes.
28. The Dual award qualifications are, in the case of the University award, awarded by the University. The partner awarding body awards the second qualification. It is recommended that a joint board of studies, is established at the point of approval, which will be accountable to the University's Academic Board and the parallel highest academic authority of the partner institution. The responsibilities of the Joint Board of Studies include approval of any changes to the programme, assessment strategies, appointment of examiners (including external examiners) and proposals for any changes to regulations.
29. Decisions of the Board of Studies require approval by the University through its current academic governance procedures. The University maintains oversight of the academic standards of the University award, through the operational academic decision making structures set out at the point of initial approval. There may be no delegation of the University's responsibilities for the oversight of academic standards and the quality of student learning opportunities provided by the programme.

University Approval and Academic Regulations Governing Dual Awards

30. At the point of approval, the University approval panel will satisfy itself that the programme, holistically, offers sufficient additionality to warrant the award of dual qualifications and confirm that it is legally permissible for the University and partner to do so.
31. A minimum of one third of the credit contributing to the University award must be taught and assessed by the University.
32. The responsibility for the award of the University's qualification and its academic standards remain with the University and cannot be shared or delegated with a partner institution. The University approval panel will therefore:
 - i) Ensure through University approval processes, the outcome of which is considered by ARPC and Academic Board, that the academic standards of both (dual) programme awards meet the expectations of the UK Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ);
 - ii) Confirm that sufficient additionality is demonstrated in the curricula and assessment of the proposed programme to warrant the granting of dual awards to students, on successful completion of the programme.
 - iii) Confirm that students may not double-count credit awarded for successfully completed modules and for credit transfer and accumulation purposes;
 - iv) Verify through the University's programme approval process, that the assessment requirements for both awards are mapped, clearly prescribed, adhere to University regulations and are robust. Particular attention will be given, at the point of approval, to the clarity of dual award learning, teaching and assessment information for stakeholders, prospective applicants and students;

- v) Establish and approve the processes for the development and approval of programme information for publication; and
 - vi) Ensure that the rights and responsibilities of students, are clearly and consistently stated in agreement with the partner.
33. Where a proposal for the development of a dual award is being considered by the University, and a programme/award that will form part of the dual award is already being offered by the partner institution, the Faculty and partner will be made aware of the implications of the University approval of a programme that is already being offered as an award by the partner institution. University programme approval panels will have the right to request that programme and content changes are made to the provision under validation, which may have a consequent impact on the programme/award offered by the partner institution.
34. The University will be responsible for the assessment of modules that it delivers. A decision will be made at the point of approval about whether a single marking scheme will be adopted and a single set of assessment regulations, stipulating the requirements of both awarding bodies for their respective awards.

Examination and Assessment Boards

35. A University Examination Board will be established to oversee progression through the programme and final award of the University qualification. Assessment decisions are taken by an Examination Board, which conforms to the requirements of the University. Partner awarding body requirements and arrangements for approval of assessment decisions, outside the scope of the University award, will also be observed by the University. A single schedule of assessment activity and all Examination Boards for the programme will be produced and agreed for approval purposes.

External Examining

36. The University's requirements for External Examination of the award must be observed and there will be consideration and agreement of any additional requirements to satisfy the requirements of the partner awarding body. Dual External Examiner appointments are considered through the University's standing External Examiner approval process. The University's External Examiner arrangements apply to individual programme modules and also, to the University award for the programme. All outcomes from External Examiner Reports will be considered via the University's standard processes and the outcomes shared with the partner institution.

Annual Monitoring and Periodic Review

37. The University agrees the monitoring and review procedures, to be adopted to satisfy requirements of the University, for a dual award programme. This will not compromise the minimum requirements of the University's Annual Monitoring and Periodic Review processes, which will operate for the Dual Award programme. All outcomes from annual monitoring and periodic review will be reported via the University's standard processes and the outcomes shared with the partner institution.

Award Certification and Transcripts

38. Students receive award certificates from each of the degree-awarding bodies for the programme. In this instance the University award certificate, transcript or diploma

supplement, must clearly refer to the other partner and state clearly that the programme is a single, joint programme of study and assessed learning, which leads to more than one separate qualification. Wherever legally permissible, the same reference to the University is included on the documents issued by the other degree-awarding body.

39. The degree classification scheme for the partner award must be equivalent to that stipulated by University regulations, consistent with the FHEQ and any requirements of the partner jurisdiction. The title of dual degree awards should be consistent with each other. The University approval panel should consider and confirm consistency with the FHEQ and of the dual award titles.

Dual and Joint Awards Programme Information

40. The University will retain rights of approval of all programme information and will ensure clarity for stakeholders, prospective applicants and students. Communications must be jointly agreed with the partner institution.

Dual and Joint Awards External Reference Points

41. When considering the development of joint or dual awards, Faculties and programme teams are advised to take account of the following external reference points:
 - i) UK Quality Code, Advice and Guidance: Partnerships; and
 - ii) QAA Characteristics Statement, Qualifications involving more than once degree-awarding body.

University Governance Arrangements for Academic Partnerships

42. The University's governance processes set out the arrangements to oversee and manage academic partnerships provision adopting risk-based approach.
43. The University's Portfolio Approval Committee (PAC) is a University executive group which meets to consider the detailed business cases for all new, revised and closing academic partnerships. This group provides detailed advice to the University Executive Group (UEG) on all academic planning and academic partnership matters. Approval by PAC for the business case for new courses and major change to provision, is required prior to consideration by Collaborative Partnerships Committee of quality assurance, academic and legal due diligence. A business case proforma is completed for consideration and review by the sponsoring Faculty.
44. The University committee structure provides formal assurance of the quality and standards of academic partnerships overseen by Academic Board. Academic Board charges Collaborative Partnerships Committee with the detailed oversight and strategic management of this provision to ensure that the comparability of the quality of the student experience and the maintenance of academic standards of university awards, irrespective of where students are studying. Academic Board reports to the University's Board of Governors in the discharge of this responsibility.
45. Executive staff roles also encompass oversight and support of academic partnerships this includes the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic, Head of the Apprenticeship and Partnerships Unit, Pro Vice Chancellor/Executive Deans, Directors of Faculty Administration and Heads of Professional Support Services Departments providing university support services including Finance, Academic Registry, Library and Learning Resources and Marketing.

46. Each academic partnership must have a legally binding contract in place arranged through the Apprenticeships and Partnership Unit and signed by the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic or Vice Chancellor on behalf of the University. A contract is signed only when the University due diligence and approval process checks have been completed and is subject to periodic due diligence and institutional monitoring.
47. Academic Governance of courses delivered within academic partnerships ensures institutional oversight and formal consideration and the parity of academic standards and the student experience of course delivery, including through the following methods:

Institutional Governance

- Executive and dedicated institutional and Faculty staff roles for oversight
- CPC and Faculty Committee oversight, reporting to Academic Board and the Board of Governors
- Institutional risk assessment and business case via PAC and initial academic due diligence processes, repeat due diligence and monitoring reported to CPC
- Partnership contract specification and management
- Partnership Strategic Review engagement on a periodic basis

Oversight and Management of Academic Standards and Quality

- Initial course approval and periodic course re-approval
- University course monitoring procedures
- Appointment of External Examiners in line with University policy
- Application of the University's Academic Regulations and quality assurance policies
- Higher education staff development and research opportunities for partner staff
- Professional Regulatory and Statutory Body (PRSB) approval as required
- Student views and feedback
- Graduate outcomes and employment/further study

Academic, Financial and Legal Due Diligence Principles (new partnerships, review and annual monitoring)

Initial risk assessment

48. It is recommended that an initial risk assessment be conducted for PAC for all new partnership proposals in advance of detailed due diligence enquiries and form part of the consideration of the business case by PAC.

Defining Due Diligence

49. Due Diligence is defined in chapter 3 of *International Partnerships – A Legal Guide For UK Universities, UK Higher Education International Unit in association with Eversheds LLP, Third Edition, March 2013*, for validated and franchise provision as:

A Due Diligence exercise should deliver as complete a picture of the potential partner as possible. The scope and depth of the Due Diligence will of course vary depending on the nature of the planned partnership. In any event, the Due Diligence should encompass the following three areas: academic, financial and legal.

50. *The three types of Due Diligence processes are further defined as:*
- a) *Academic Due Diligence will allow you to examine the academic quality and reputation, degree awarding powers, and the teaching and research resources or capacity of the department(s) and post holder(s) to be involved in the collaboration. This is a crucial part of the Due Diligence exercise as it cuts to the very core of your activities and the feasibility or benefits of a potential collaboration. The academic Due Diligence needs to be tailored to the nature of the suggested partners;*
 - b) *Financial Due Diligence: The scope and depth of financial Due Diligence, will need to be adapted to the nature and content of the planned partnership and your provisional risk assessment. It is also noted that, as a minimum, the financial Due Diligence usually includes reviewing an institution's audited financial accounts, balance sheet and directors'/governors' reports for the last 3 to 5 financial years. This would apply to all validated and franchised provision; and*
 - c) *Legal Due Diligence: The main purpose is to elucidate high risk or major issues which would have a material impact on your partnership negotiations and arrangements detailing the potential effect and risk factor of such issues and suggesting solutions.*
51. The University adopts a broad framework of risk-based Due Diligence requirements is adopted with the following *minimum* requirements, tailored for each model:
- a) Admission Agreements: Academic and basic legal Due Diligence
 - b) Articulation Agreements: Academic and basic legal Due Diligence
 - c) Validation Agreements: Academic, legal and financial Due Diligence
 - d) Franchise (sub-contractual) arrangements: Academic, legal and financial Due Diligence
 - e) Joint Awards: Academic, legal and financial Due Diligence
 - f) Dual Awards: Academic, legal and financial Due Diligence
52. Due Diligence processes are operated cyclically for all types of partnership activity. Due Diligence should be conducted periodically, with annual monitoring and periodic review appropriate to the type of partnership and the assessment of risk involved.

For all transnational education partnerships additional checks of local jurisdictional academic, legal and financial requirements are required. The results should be auditable and accessible, reported to Collaborative Partnerships Committee. APU takes a lead role in the conduct and oversight of formal due diligence. Faculty complete initial risk assessments for new partnership proposals and review and monitoring.

Section 2: Approval and Periodic Re-approval of Academic Partners: Institutional

Institutional Approval Visit Policy

53. An institutional approval visit will be conducted to review and consider the development of the partnership and shared issues for discussion including the mission of both institutions and, vision, together with partnership development plans, resourcing, staffing and student support.
54. The institutional review visit is convened on the completion, and 'sign off', of a financial, legal and academic due diligence. In advance of the institutional approval visit, a due diligence exercise is undertaken by the University's APU. Due diligence must normally be completed prior to the institutional visit.
55. The scope and depth of the due diligence exercise will be dependent on the nature of the institutional partnership. The due diligence exercise should encompass the following three areas: academic, financial and legal:
- 55.1 Financial Due Diligence:
Review of audited financial accounts and director's reports since date of last approval (last 3 years minimum).
- 55.2 Legal Due Diligence:
Review of the following documentation for the legal due diligence check details of changes or updates to:
- The institution's legal constitution;
 - Governance structure;
 - Institutional leadership and management structure, with names and positions of executive officers;
 - The institution's health and safety policy;
 - Information regarding insurance and public liability; and
 - Local government or jurisdiction, licence requirements for delivery and any changes expected.
56. Further information on the principles and process for the due diligence exercise is available from the Head of the APU.
57. An Institutional visit normally occurs separately, and in advance, of course validation events to access the suitability of the premises and support infrastructure for the delivery of University course provision and to support higher education students.
58. Normally the visit takes place, for TNE provision, at the premises of the partner institution. Initial discussions are held between the partner, APU, Faculty and Chair of the institutional approval Panel to confirm the institutional visit and course validation process, and timeframes. The University also operates virtual approval processes.

Institutional Reviewers

59. As part of the approval of a new University institutional partnerships, the University's Collaborative Partnerships Committee (CPC) commissions internal reviewers to visit the proposed partner and undertake an assessment of resources and facilities for delivery of UK higher education courses and support for students. In addition, reviewers are asked to consider the operation of institutional arrangements for the management of quality and standards of course provision leading to a University award or credit. Where an in person visit is not possible a virtual meeting will be arranged, normally as part of Annual Strategic Review and Monitoring.
60. Reviewers are a senior member of the University academic staff team, and comprise, normally, three staff, including a senior member of APU, with membership approved by the Chair of CPC.
61. Institutional reviewers identify recommendations to the University's Collaborative Partnerships Committee in relation to the institutional partnership. This comprises the decision of the review team. Approval may be conditional, and/or carry recommendations. Reviewers also identify good practice for dissemination and commendation.

Documentation requirements

62. Full documentation for institutional approval must be received by the APU no later than four weeks prior to the institutional review visit and submitted to the following email address: ApprenticeshipsandPartnershipUnit@bcu.ac.uk
63. As part of the submission, documentary evidence and an evaluative review, arising out of issues detailed in the documentary submission must be provided.

Indicative Programme

64. The visit will be organised by the APU and will follow a standard programme. Normally the institutional approval visit will follow the standard format outlined below:
 - Presentation by the partner
 - Tour of relevant resources (university approval is site specific)
 - Where more than one site is delivering university courses, additional preliminary site visits may be arranged in consultation with the partner prior to the institutional review);
 - Meeting with senior management team of the partner institution;
 - Meeting with current students (student feedback from all course delivery sites will be arranged in consultation with the partner and Faculty); and
 - Informal feedback of outcome to the partner.
65. A full list of participants, who are expected to be present, is requested to be provided to APU one week prior to the visit:
 - Participants from the senior management team at the partner institution (including name, titles and job titles);
 - Students from the partner institution (including name, name of the course and year of entry) participating in the student level meeting; and
 - Representatives from the Faculty, where possible by video conferencing, in agreement with the Chair of the Institutional Approval Panel.

66. The outcome of the visit will be submitted to CPC for consideration and approval. Once formal approval is obtained from the CPC, the outcome will be communicated to the partner institution by the Head of APU.

Institutional Re-approval Policy

67. A periodic institutional re-approval will be conducted to review and consider the development of the partnership and shared issues for discussion including the mission of both institutions, and vision, together with partnership development plans, resourcing, staffing and student support. Re-approval is required to renew an academic partnership contract, which is time-boundaried, normally for a period of 3 to 5 years. However, the contract period may be varied depending on perception of risk, course length and arrangements and local jurisdictional requirements. Where an in person visit is not possible a virtual review may be permissible and be considered in parallel with Strategic Annual Review and Monitoring virtual meetings.
68. The institutional re-approval visit is normally convened on the completion of a repeat financial, legal and academic due diligence. Normally an institutional visit or virtual re-approval occurs separately, and in advance, of course validation and revalidation events.
69. Normally the re-approval takes place, for TNE and UK partners, at the premises of the partner institution. Initial discussions are held between the partner, APU, Faculty and Chair of the Institutional Re-approval Panel to confirm the institutional review visit and course re-validation process, and timeframes. Where an in person visit is not indicated a virtual review of resources to support University courses is put in place by APU.

Institutional Reviewers

70. As part of the approval and/or periodic re-approval (normally a 5 year cycle) of existing University institutional partnerships, the University's Collaborative Partnerships Committee (CPC) commissions internal reviewers to visit the proposed partner and undertake an assessment of resources and facilities for delivery of UK higher education courses and support for students. In addition, reviewers are asked to consider the operation of institutional arrangements for the management of quality and standards of course provision leading to a University award or credit. Where an in person visit is not indicated a virtual review of resources to support University courses is put in place by APU and conducted by reviewers.
71. Reviewers are a senior member of the University team, and comprise, normally, three staff, including a senior member of APU, approved by the Chair of CPC.
72. Institutional reviewers identify recommendations to the University's Collaborative Partnerships Committee in relation to the institutional partnership. This comprises the decision of the review team. Approval may be conditional, and/or carry recommendations. Reviewers also identify good practice for dissemination and commendation.

Documentation requirements

73. Full documentation for institutional re-approval must be received by the APU normally no later than four weeks prior to the institutional review visit and submitted to the following email address: ApprenticeshipsandPartnershipUnit@bcu.ac.uk

74. As part of the submission, documentary evidence and an evaluative review, arising out of issues detailed in the documentary submission must be provided. The evaluative review must detail the performance and experience of students on University awards during the review period, including admission, attrition, progression and completion, student satisfaction and employment/further study following graduation.
75. Prior due diligence review includes published partner financial accounts for the review period under consideration, any changes to the legal status of the partner, and a review and updating where appropriate of partnership contractual requirements.
76. In advance of the institutional re-approval visit, a repeat due diligence exercise is undertaken by the University's APU. Due diligence must be completed prior to the institutional visit.
77. The scope and depth of the due diligence exercise will be dependent on the nature of the institutional partnership. The repeat due diligence exercise should encompass the following three areas: academic, financial and legal.
- 77.1 Financial Due Diligence:
Review of audited financial accounts and director's reports since date of last approval (minimum of 3 years).
- 77.2 Legal Due Diligence:
Review of the following documentation for the repeat legal due diligence check details of changes or updates to:
- The institution's legal constitution;
 - Governance structure;
 - Current institutional leadership and management structure, with names and positions of executive officers, highlighting any changes during the review period and planned;
 - The institution's health and safety policy;
 - Information regarding insurance and public liability; and
 - Local government or jurisdiction, licence requirements for delivery and any changes expected.
78. Further information on the principles and process for the due diligence exercise is available from the Head of the APU.

Indicative Programme

79. The visit, or virtual review, will be organised by the APU and will follow a standard programme. Normally the institutional re-approval visit will follow the standard format outlined below:
- Presentation by the partner
 - Tour of relevant resources (university approval is site specific)
 - Where more than one site is delivering university courses, additional preliminary site visits may be arranged in consultation with the partner prior to the institutional review);
 - Meeting with senior management team of the partner institution;
 - Meeting with current students (student feedback from all course delivery sites will be arranged in consultation with the partner and Faculty); and
 - Informal feedback of outcome to the partner.

80. A full list of participants, who are expected to be present, is requested to be provided to APU one week prior to the visit:
- Participants from the senior management team at the partner institution (including name, titles and job titles);
 - Students from the partner institution (including name, name of the course and year of entry) participating in the student level meeting; and
 - Representatives from the Faculty, where possible by video conferencing, in agreement with the Chair of the Institutional Review Panel.

Institutional Re-Approval Visit Outcome

81. The outcome of the visit will be submitted to CPC for consideration and approval. Once formal approval is obtained from the CPC, the outcome will be communicated to the partner institution by the Head of APU.

Virtual Approval and Re-approval Policy

82. Birmingham City University will conduct an interactive virtual approval/re-approval visit where an on-site visit is not deemed appropriate by CPC. This facility is normally extended to the review and re-approval of existing academic partnerships and would only be applied to the consideration of a new academic partnerships with the express permission of CPC and University Executive, where its application is considered to be low risk. The purpose of the virtual approval/re-approval visit is to consider facilities and resources to support the delivery of University awards at a partner institution campus. The virtual review visit, including an analysis of support documentation provided by the partner institution, will be conducted by an independent Panel, on behalf of CPC, of senior staff institutional reviewers of the University. Senior members of the Faculty/Faculties, course team representatives and Link Tutor may also be invited to attend.
83. The Apprenticeships and Partnership Unit will arrange and agree a schedule of meetings, an indicative programme and required attendees with the partner prior to the virtual review visit. Meetings will take place online using Microsoft Teams. A preparatory meeting will be arranged in advance of the formal meetings to check that the video conference platform is accessible. An agreed contingency plan will be agreed in place in the event of technology issues on the day of the visit.
84. Partner institutions are to provide supporting documentation and a virtual tour of facilities and resources available to students studying a University award to evidence appropriateness. The evidence can be presented through a combination of a livestream guided tour, video (pre-recorded) and photographs for format of which to be agreed in advance of the visit by APU. During the guided virtual tour, a question and answer sessions will form part of the programme. The Panel may request to view certain facilities or resources and the University will provide advanced notice as far as possible. It is intended that as far as possible virtual review of facilities mirrors that of an on-site visit. APU will liaise with partners in advance of review to determine the technical platform to be used and University requirements.
85. Where blended and digital approaches to learning are being utilised by a partner, either as part of the validation agreement or subsequent agreement due to pandemic, APU will request a demonstration of the virtual learning platform and environment for the Panel as deemed appropriate in consultation with the Chair.

86. The faculty are requested to submit any reports or evidence of partner engagement around resourcing in the 12 months prior to the visit. APU will also make an available strategic review and outcomes, including external examiner reports and statistical reports, where appropriate.
87. The outcome of the virtual approval/re-approval visit submitted to the CPC for consideration and approval. Once formal approval is obtained from the CPC, the outcome will be communicated to the partner institution by the Head of APU.

Section 3: Course Delivery Approval and Re-approval

Course Delivery Approval Policy

88. A course approval event will be conducted to consider curriculum delivery, student experience, and quality and standards issues. The event is convened once any conditions of an institutional approval visit has been formally approved, including the completion of financial and legal due diligence. The event may take place at the partner institution, or where formally agreed, be conducted at the University through video conference arrangements.
89. Initial discussions are held between the partner, APU, Faculty and Chair of the course validation (or approval where a validated university award is to be delivered) to confirm arrangements for the event and the course validation process, and timeframes.

Members of the Panel

90. As part of the validation of a new course(s) delivered at a new University institutional partner, the University's Collaborative Partnerships Committee (CPC) appoints a panel to consider the curriculum delivery, student support and experience, and management of quality and standards of course provision leading to a University award or credit. APU is responsible for establishing members of the panel, following approval of the Chair of CPC.
91. The panel will set recommendations or conditions in relation to validation of delivery of a course(s). A response to conditions must be formally approved, prior to commencement of delivery of a course(s). The Panel will also identify good practice for dissemination and commendation.
92. Where the validation will consider new course or module approval the faculty is required to nominate an external academic advisor(s) at least eight weeks before the event. In advance of the event, proposed nominees should be shared with the APU to ensure that the nominee meets the criteria of selection.
93. External panel members must be entirely independent of the institution in which the course(s) is based. The external should not have been an employee (either full-time or part-time) of the institution, or have acted as an external examiner to a course(s) in the institution, in the previous five years. External academic panel members should not normally be drawn from close competitors of the institution and the University, to avoid potential conflicts of interest. External academic panel members should have appropriate subject expertise as well as experience of course design and delivery at the level of the courses under consideration.

Documentation requirements

94. Full documentation must be received no later than four weeks prior to the event and submitted to the following email address: ApprenticeshipsandPartnershipUnit@bcu.ac.uk.

Indicative programme

95. The event will be organised by the APU and will follow a standard programme. Normally the event will follow the standard format outlined below:

- Presentation by the partner;
 - Meeting with senior management and teaching team at the partner;
 - Tour of relevant resources (where appropriate);
 - Meeting with current students; and
 - Informal feedback of outcome to the partner.
96. A full list of participants who are expected at the visit must be provided to APU two weeks prior to the event:
- Participants from the senior management team at the partner institution (including name, titles and job titles);
 - Students from the partner institution (including name and the name of the course(s)) participating in the student level meeting; and
 - Representatives from the Faculty and course team, normally the BCU Course Leader and proposed Link Tutor.

Course Validation Outcome

97. The outcome of the course validated event will be submitted to CPC for consideration and approval. Once formal approval is obtained by CPC, the outcome will be communicated to the partner institution by the Head of APU.

Course Delivery Approval and Re-approval Policy

98. A course delivery approval or re-approval will consider curriculum delivery, student experience, and quality and standards issues. The event is convened once any conditions of institutional re-approval visit has been formally approved by CPC. The event may take place at the partner institution, or where formally agreed, be conducted at the University through video conference arrangements.
99. Initial discussions are held between the partner, APU, Faculty and Chair of the course validation to confirm arrangements for the event and the course revalidation process, and timeframes.

Members of the Panel

100. As part of the periodic re-approval (3 - 5 year cycle) of existing a course(s) delivered at a University institutional partner, the University's Collaborative Partnerships Committee (CPC) appoints a panel to consider the curriculum delivery, student support and experience, and management of quality and standards of course provision leading to a University award or credit. APU is responsible for establishing members of the panel, following approval of the Chair of CPC.
101. The panel will set recommendations or conditions in relation to, approval/re-approval or termination, of delivery of a course(s). A response to conditions must be formally approved, prior to commencement of delivery of a course.
102. The Faculty is required to nominate an external academic advisor at least eight weeks before the approval/re-approval event. In advance of the event, proposed nominees should be shared with the APU to ensure that the nominee meets the criteria of selection. External panel members must be entirely independent of the institution in which the courses are based, as well as Birmingham City University. They should not have been an employee (either full-time or part-time) of the institution, or have acted as an external examiner to courses in the institution, in the previous five years. External academic panel members

should not normally be drawn from close competitors of the institution, to avoid potential conflicts of interest. External academic panel members should have appropriate subject expertise as well as experience of course design and delivery at the level of the course(s) under consideration.

Documentation requirements

103. As part of the submission, documentary evidence and contextual evaluation addressing issues must be provided. Full documentation must be received at least four weeks before the event and submitted to the following email address:
ApprenticeshipsandPartnershipUnit@bcu.ac.uk

Indicative programme

104. The visit will be organised by the APU and will follow a standard programme. Normally the event will follow the standard format outlined below:
- Presentation by the partner;
 - Meeting with senior management and teaching team at the partner;
 - Tour of relevant resources (where appropriate);
 - Meeting with current students; and
 - Informal feedback of outcome to the partner.
105. A full list of participants who are expected at the visit must be provided to APU prior to the visit:
- Participants from the senior management team at the partner institution (including name, titles and job titles);
 - Students from the partner institution (including name and the name of the course) participating in the student level meeting; and
 - Representatives from the Faculty and course team

Course Delivery Approval/ Re-approval Outcome

106. The outcome of the course delivery approval/re-approval outcome will be submitted to CPC for consideration and approval. Once formal approval is obtained by CPC, the outcome will be communicated to the partner institution.

Section 4: Institutional Monitoring

Institutional Monitoring and Strategic Academic Partnerships Review Policy

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, all partnerships are being reviewed and monitored through this process during 2020, 2021 and 2022, with repeat Due Diligence and scrutiny and revision of contracts and business arrangements to ensure appropriate partner and student support during the pandemic. The University's External Examiner and quality assurance requirements also continue to operate.

Scope and Purpose of the Strategic Partnership Review Meeting

107. Birmingham City University's mission and vision provides key enablers for transnational education and UK based partnerships to provide higher education opportunities which widen access and promote excellence in professional practice, in collaboration with our academic partners. The University currently has transnational partners in a range of local jurisdictions and UK based partnerships offering local higher education opportunities for students which build upon the strengths and specialism of the University and partner organisation. As the university for Birmingham, BCU works strategically with local partners to promote higher education opportunities for the area and to promote internationalisation of the curriculum.
108. The University has put in place periodic academic partnership review meetings to provide strategic opportunities for review and enhancement of academic partnerships in conjunction with our partners. The principal scope and purpose of the strategic review meeting is to discuss current operations, quality and standards, review business arrangements and future plans.

BCU's Strategic Review Process, Areas for Discussion and Outcomes

109. The University's strategic partnership review processes are designed to meet the requirements of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. During the review meeting, opportunity is provided for representatives of both the University and the academic partner to meet and discuss on the following areas:
 - A. Strategic Development;
 - B. Operational Matters;
 - C. Learning and Teaching; and
 - D. Future Planning.
110. At the end of the review meeting, the Chair will summarise the conclusion and recommendations arising from shared discussion for agreement. A formal outcome summary will be provided to the partner institution by the Panel Officer on behalf of the Chair and reported to the University's Collaborative Partnerships Committee (CPC) who has the responsibility of maintaining academic standards for academic partnerships, delegated authority by the University's Academic Board. CPC also has the oversight of the operation and management of the learning opportunities which lead to the award of credit or an award that are delivered, assessed or supported through an arrangement with another organisation or provider, (the University's collaborative provision). The University's Portfolio Approval Committee (PAC) manage and oversee the strategic

approval of new courses and academic partnerships and to coordinate student number target setting and forecasting. Any new proposed developments arising from the meeting will be initially considered by PAC.

111. As part of the review meeting, repeat due diligence (legal, financial and academic) will be conducted by the University's Apprenticeships and Partnership Unit, where appropriate, in line with the University due diligence principles and Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) guidance. Updated information may be requested by APU, in advance or following the meeting, to assist with the process.
112. The University (including courses delivered with international academic partners) is subject to regular scrutiny under the Office for Students (Government regulator for England with full regulatory powers from the 1 August 2019) annual provider review procedures with the QAA the designated quality assurance body of Higher Education courses in England. The OfS requires awarding bodies to provide data sets on enrolment data, degree outcomes, progression data, graduate outcomes data, student satisfaction and staff professional development from our academic partners. As part of the review and monitoring of academic partnerships, the University will contact partners to provide this information as appropriate.

Recommended minimum documentation for consideration

113. As part of the partnership review meetings, recommended minimum documentation will be required. Partners are requested to provide the below information to the Apprenticeships and Partnership Unit following the meeting:
 - Evaluation of the quality of student experience and areas of good practice and development;
 - Current governance structure highlighting any recent or intended changes;
 - Changes in senior staffing (and ownership for private providers);
 - Copies of any inspection reports or any reports by external agencies over the previous 18 month period;
 - Copy of the most recent published financial report; and
 - Information specified in the partnership return form supplied by APU.
114. The University will provide information on:
 - Annual review process guidance;
 - Data on enrolment data, student numbers and forecasts for agreement;
 - Partnership contract for reference purposes;
 - Changes to academic regulations and policy;
 - The University most published financial report; and
 - Changes to University governance, key personnel, services and contracts.

Compliance with University's Publicity, Marketing and Brand Guidelines

Approval and Review of publicity and marketing materials

115. The University's brand guidelines have been developed for staff, suppliers, external companies and academic partners in order to provide clear guidance on the use of the University's logo and associated branding.
116. To ensure compliance with the University guidelines and Competition and Markets Authority guidance to HE providers on consumer rights legislation, the Apprenticeships and Partnership Unit, in consultation with the University's Marketing and Communications team, provides guidance on the use of the University's logo and associated branding. Academic partners should liaise with the Apprenticeships and Partnership Unit for all publicity and marketing materials that are designed by academic partners used to recruit students to University awards. The Apprenticeships and Partnership Unit also undertakes periodic checks of academic partners' websites to ensure continued appropriateness and accuracy. Any issues of concern will be raised with the academic partner at an institutional level.
117. All publicity and marketing materials (including leaflets, prospectus, web pages and social media platforms) should reflect accurately the nature of the partnership in line with what has been approved by the University. The following standard principals are used as a guide when reviewing publicity and marketing materials:
 - Where Birmingham City University's logo is used, the University's branding guidelines has been followed;
 - The Birmingham City University's logo is only used in publicity and marketing material directly related to the University awards approved for delivery offered within the academic partnership with the University;
 - It is clear that Birmingham City University is the awarding body and the courses are validated by Birmingham City University. This is to ensure that there are no misleading statements about the nature and standing of the academic partnership between Birmingham City University and the partner;
 - Location (academic partner campus address) and mode of study, for each University award, is made explicit;
 - References to any Professional, Statutory, and Regulatory Body accreditation, for University awards, are only displayed once approval is confirmed by the University;
 - Student or graduate testimonials should be more than 3 years old;
 - Information about facilities and resources available to students studying a University award is accurate; and
 - Information on the application process is clear for applicants.
118. Members of the BCU course team and Link Tutor review the accuracy of the curriculum offer and entry requirements presented on publicity and marketing materials. The standard checklist is as follows:
 - Course award title is accurate
 - Course duration (start and end dates) is accurate
 - Course overview, mode of study, approach to learning and teaching, modules and descriptions of the structure and content of the University award are accurate; and

- The agreed entry and admissions criteria is accurate. This is to ensure there are no misleading statements about entry requirements, credit for prior learning or the duration of the University award;
 - Teaching and assessment information is clear and accurate;
 - Approved progression routes to enable entry to University awards are clearly stated, where applicable; and
 - Employment and further study options on graduation from a University award are clearly articulated and accurately set out.
119. Before any publicity and marketing materials can be printed, sent to a publication or distributed externally, it must be approved by the Apprenticeships and Partnership Unit. For publicity and marketing material approvals, academic partners are requested to the materials to the Unit using following email address:
ApprenticeshipsandPartnershipUnit@bcu.ac.uk
120. For any updated publicity and promotional material, including web pages, academic partners should seek the approval of the University before publication.
121. Further information is provided in the University's Brand Guidelines.

Academic Partnership Course Monitoring

122. All academic partnership courses leading to University award or credit will be periodically monitored by the University, overseen and reported to Academic Board, by CPC. The nature of monitoring undertaken is determined by CPC and will be consistent with the principles stipulated for courses delivered with the University, with additional, requirements stipulated by CPC for institutional strategic review and monitoring.

Principles of Academic Partnership Course Monitoring

123. The University will via CPC monitor the quality of academic partnership courses on an annual basis. This will include thematic monitoring of courses which are teaching out, review of external examiner reports, admission, progression and completion. During 2021/ 2022 there will be a thematic review of academic partnership graduate outcomes and student satisfaction.

Principles of Academic Partnership External Examining

124. Each academic partnership course leading to a University award will have an external examiner appointed to it in line with University External Examiner Policy and requirements. APU will complete an annual review of external examiner reports for academic partnership courses, normally in the autumn term of the academic year following submission of the report. The review is submitted to CPC and onward to other University committees as appropriate.

Principles of the Link Tutor/ Academic Advisor role

Principles

125. The role of the Link Tutor/ Academic Advisor comprises the following general University principles which operate across all academic partnership models and course delivery. Individual roles for academic partnerships may vary dependent upon the nature of the

partner organisation, the courses being delivered and numbers of students and local jurisdictional requirements as appropriate:

- Supporting Birmingham City University's oversight and management of maintaining academic standards and quality, for University awards, delivered by a partner institution within the approved academic partnership;
- Overseeing the academic quality of the student experience and learning opportunities for students studying on a University award delivered at a partner institution;
- Guiding and supporting the application of Birmingham City University's University academic regulations, policies and procedures, in conjunction with the Apprenticeships and Partnership Unit, for University awards;
- Coordinating and advising the partner on University contacts for module delivery, assessment and attendance at partner Board of Studies;
- Advising partner institutions on any staff development and research opportunities as the main contact; and
- Contributing to the continuous monitoring and review, at course level, of University awards delivered by a partner institution.

Section 5: Changes to Academic Partnerships

Approval of a Change or Addition of Delivery Site

126. The University approves the site and location for the delivery of University awards to ensure that resources and facilities are appropriate to support the delivery of approved courses, by a partner institution, following a visit to the site by University Institutional Reviewers. As approval is site specific, any changes to change site of delivery or addition of location of delivery must be approved by the University's Collaborative Partnerships Committee prior to the delivery of courses at the new site. The University is also required to notify its regulator the Office for Students (OfS) of change in location of transnational education.
127. In order to approve and consider a change of a delivery site or addition a new delivery site, a notification should be submitted to the University's Apprenticeships and Partnerships Unit prior to the proposed change.
128. Institutional Reviewers will be appointed to review the documents and will participate in tour of physical facilities and resources, which will be available to students, at the proposed site or virtually using video conferencing facilities. Photographs and/or videos are requested to be submitted to APU and presented to a Panel for consideration by the academic partner institution.
129. The Institutional Reviewers will formulate their conclusions, including any conditions and recommendations, regarding site approval following a discussion on the arrangements of physical facilities and resources with the academic partner institution.
130. If the Institutional Reviewers have agreed to recommend site approval, APU should establish the terms of site approval. It may be recommended that site approval should be subject to the meeting of conditions which must be satisfied before the delivery of courses. If it is decided not to recommend site approval, the Institutional Reviewers will be asked to provide a list of areas where deemed that the proposal is not yet satisfactory or where further development is required. The Institutional Reviewers will also make recommendations regarding the maximum number of students that may be registered the course having regard to the available resources, staffing and support arrangements. The full Panel outcome will be provided to the University's Collaborative Partnerships Committee (CPC) for consideration.
131. Once approval is granted by CPC, a formal notification of the outcome will be submitted to the partner by APU. In consultation with the University's Legal team, where appropriate, APU will coordinate amendments to the institutional contract to include the changed or additional site.
132. Updated legal and financial due diligence may be conducted by APU to support the approval. An academic partner institution may be requested to provide additional documents to support this exercise and will be advised by APU.

Approval of changes to intakes, student numbers, partner staffing

133. Student intakes/cohorts and students numbers (minimum and maximum) are initially considered and approved by PAC and CPC for University awards delivered by an academic partner. PAC considers recruitment forecasts and market demand. CPC considers the physical resource and staffing capacity the quality of student experience

for delivery a University award when determining the student intake/cohort and student numbers.

134. Recruitment to the University award and intake may not exceed this maximum unless specific approval has been granted. Normally this would only be granted when the University has received evidence of additional resources available to the apprenticeship. Any changes to intake and student numbers must be approved by the University.
135. Once approval is granted by CPC, a formal notification of the outcome will be submitted to the partner by APU. In consultation with the University's Legal team, where appropriate, APU will coordinate amendments to the institutional contract to include the changed or additional site.
136. Updated legal and financial due diligence may be conducted by APU to support the approval. An academic partner institution may be requested to provide additional documents to support this exercise and will be advised by APU.
137. Changes to academic staffing must be considered and approved by the Pro-Vice Chancellor and Executive Dean of the BCU Faculty in which the course academically sits. All changes, together with CV's, must be lodged with APU.

Notification of change of ownership, control, legal form or structure

138. The University requires that any change of ownership, control or legal form of an academic partner must be reported in advance to the Head of the Apprenticeship and Partnership Unit and Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic. This will require appropriate Due Diligence to be instituted and changes approved by CPC for the purposes of the Academic Partnership, prior to contractual updating. A full institutional re-approval may be required. All action will be reported to CPC and onwards to Academic Board.

Section 6: Closure of Academic Partnerships

Academic Partnership and Course Closures Policy

139. Proposals to close academic partnerships or any of the courses delivered within the partnership, are considered and approved by PAC using a standard partnership closure form.
140. CPC reviews proposals for closure and teach-out plans to ensure appropriate support for students for course completion and the maintenance of academic standards and quality during the teach-out period. The University communicates substantive changes and closures of institutional partnerships to the Office for Students as required by registration.
141. A University formal notification letter, drafted by APU, and approved and signed by the DVC (Academic) or VC where appropriate, will be sent to the partner institution confirming the decision to close the partnership, with the appropriate notice period and end date of partnership communicated. This is coordinated by APU. Arrangements for academic partnership closure are set out within the academic partnership agreement and teach out quality is monitored by CPC.