

Educational Partnerships Code of Practice

1. INTRODUCTION

For any partnership arrangement leading to credit or an award of the University Keele must take ultimate responsibility for the academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities in respect to its academic provision and awards, irrespective of where these are delivered or who provides them. This Code 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 risk associated with the partnership 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 partnership arrangements based on the capacity of respective University teams and the contribution of the proposed partner/s. It should however be recognised that in adopting a risk-based approach, the University will not compromise its ability to assure the quality and standards of its awards, or that of the student experience.

1.1 Purpose

1.1.1 This version of the Code of Practice replaces the 2021 version of the Code of Practice. This version of the Code has been developed in line with external expectations set out in the Office for Students (OfS) Regulatory Framework and Quality and Standards Conditions of Registration, and has been updated to reflect revisions to the University's Professional Services and committee structure, with revisions to key processes as a result of continued institutional enhancement generated through experience and external developments.

1.1.2 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 [Educational Partnerships Team Intranet pages](#). Oversight of the guides and forms is the responsibility of the Educational Partnerships Committee (EPC) on behalf of the University's Education Committee.

1.1.3 The University recognises that partnership activities cover a wide range of models and this Code is therefore broadly based to cover a number of partnership models currently in operation, including the delivery of provision leading to the award of academic credit or a Keele degree at undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research level where this delivery takes place in locations away from the main University premises in association with a partner or collaborator. This Code articulates a shared understanding of the nature of educational-based, and Collaborative Provision partnerships wherever they occur and clarifies the necessary quality assurance requirements to ensure the University meets its responsibilities as an OfS registered degree

awarding body, and its duty of care and contractual obligations to students, external stakeholders such as Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) and to its partner institutions.

1.1.4 This document provides guidance to those who are involved in the development or management of educational partnerships. 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 1.3.

1.2 Scope

1.2.1 This Code covers a wide range of partnership activities, including Articulations, Validations, Franchises, Joint/Dual Awards, and Flying Faculty/Off-Site Delivery. Section 1.3 lists in more detail which types of arrangements fall under this Code of Practice. The processes set out in this Code will apply to all new partnerships approved by the Student Recruitment and Admissions Group (SRAG), and, in some cases, the University Executive Committee (UEC).

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

1.2.3 Recruitment-based partnerships such as progression arrangements are also not covered by this Code.

1.3 Definitions

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

1.3.2 **Articulation:** A partnership model whereby cohorts of students from an identified programme at a partner institution gain advanced standing for entry towards a named programme at Keele. The entry criteria and/or volume of credit from a programme/s of study at an approved partner to be transferred are pre-determined under a legal agreement. Keele is responsible for assuring itself that the standards set and achieved by students at the partner are equivalent to those set and achieved by other Keele students studying the same Keele 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. Keele is responsible for students progressing through an articulation agreement being able to obtain an honours degree, and students progressing to Keele must be able to demonstrate sufficient English language ability upon entry. 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. Articulation arrangements are made at institutional level and guarantee students' entry onto a designated Keele programme with advanced standing. Application of the University's Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and procedure will not typically apply. The student successfully completing the agreed part of the programme at the partner will automatically have the right to progress to Keele, providing the academic and English language requirements have been met.

1.3.3 Co-Delivery: A partnership model classified as Collaborative Provision, 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.

1.3.4 Dual Award (Dual Parchment): A partnership model classified as Collaborative Provision, this is 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, it should be structured as a joint initiative, designed and developed by both partners to offer a distinctive learning experience.

1.3.5 Dual PhD: A partnership model classified as Collaborative Provision, a dual PhD enables students to receive separate PhD awards from two partner institutions involved in a research degree programme, following research undertaken by the student at each institution. In most cases both institutions 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.

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

1.3.7 Joint Award/Programme: A partnership model classified as Collaborative Provision, 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. Normally, for Keele to wish to be part of a joint award/programme consortium, a distinctive and substantial part of the programme would be provided by Keele.

1.3.8 Joint PhD: A partnership model classified as Collaborative Provision, a Joint PhD enables students to receive a single joint PhD for the collaborative research undertaken at two institutions. Both institutions 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.

1.3.9 Multiple Award: A partnership model classified as Collaborative Provision, 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.

1.3.10 Off-Site Delivery Overseas (including Flying Faculty): A partnership model classified as Collaborative Provision, this is where members of Keele staff provide block teaching, often supplemented by distance and online 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 higher education 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 SRAG, and, on exception, UEC, 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.

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

The following models for programme endorsement are accepted:

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

Quality Assured Endorsement: In this model, Keele quality assures the provision of an external organisation, undertaking a more detailed academic review of the external organisation's provision, expanding on the review carried out for Programme Endorsement with an additional review of the assessment design, learning outcomes, marking and moderation practices, student achievement and retention outcomes. The endorsement would be conditional on a successful annual review and all review activity must be undertaken by Keele academic staff with subject expertise. Subject to a successful review, the status of the external provider's programme would be 'quality assured by Keele University' and this can be reflected in promotional material. Keele would only provide a quality assured status of endorsement in disciplines where it has academic expertise and where the organisation's provision has an academic dimension to merit endorsement from a higher education provider.

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

1.3.12 Split Site PhD: A partnership model classified as Collaborative Provision, this is defined as a research degree which leads to a Keele award but is dependent on a partner organisation and supervision from a partner organisation, and involves students being registered for a research degree at Keele whilst spending a significant period of their research away from the University, at another approved organisation¹, which can, but does not have to be, overseas. All Split Site PhDs

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.

require a formal agreement between Keele and the partner(s), with specific details on the arrangements pertaining to a student's research experience set out in the offer letter issued by Keele. 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 attached as an appendix to this Code (**Appendix 1**).

1.3.13 Validation: A partnership model classified as Collaborative Provision, this is where a programme is developed, delivered and assessed by a partner whilst being awarded and quality assured by Keele. Keele is responsible for ensuring the standards of the programme are equivalent to its own programmes. In exceptional circumstances, where Keele does not offer a comparable programme, Keele will carefully benchmark the standards of the validated programme against comparable programmes offered elsewhere in the UK higher education sector. The approved partner institution is responsible for the design of the programme and quality of the student learning experience.

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

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

1.4.2 Recognising the inherent risks and challenges of navigating the complex and varied realities of legal and ideological divergences, cultural and social attitudes and beliefs of inter-cultural collaboration, any educational partnership proposal Keele pursues and actively engages with, should be tested against the principles below, aligned with the Universities UK '[Managing Risks in Internationalisation](#)' publication, and embedded into formal processes set out within this Code of Practice.

1.4.3 Educational Partnerships at Keele:

- Must consider the distinct risks associated with the partnership. Risk assessment should be conducted and risk mitigation strategies implemented where necessary, proportionate to the level of risk. Where there is a direct impact on Keele staff and/or

students, these risks, and their potential implications, should be appropriately disclosed to Keele staff and/or students impacted;

- Must ensure that the academic integrity of the University's awards are safeguarded and that the University's reputation and the academic experience of its students are not compromised by the collaboration;
- Should be mutually beneficial, and, wherever possible, and within scope of the University's regulatory and policy framework, and its obligations as a UK awarding body, should aim to facilitate a distinctive contribution from each partner;
- Must be delivered in accordance with the University's regulatory and policy framework, with any exceptions explicitly agreed between the University and partner and continuously reviewed;
- Must respect the principles of academic integrity and freedom of expression as set out in Keele's Code of Practice for Freedom of Expression and remain protected elements of any collaboration;
- Must respect the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion as set out in Keele's Equality and Diversity Strategy;
- Should be delivered in line with University expectations regarding good practice in learning, teaching and research, whilst recognising the importance of facilitating inter-cultural practices in collaboration, fostering robust, safe and explorative opportunities for divergent and/or innovative practices to be delivered, provided Keele staff and student safety is not jeopardised and there are no risks of the University contravening any relevant internal or external regulatory frameworks and laws;
- Must be delivered in accordance with Keele IT, Information Security and Cyber Security policies and processes throughout the partnership. Whilst there will be no default assumption of access to systems or information; through the collaborative building of robust operational frameworks, the University will ensure the necessary users and partners with a valid requirement have access to University data and/or networks, with safety protocols such as two-step identity verification in place wherever possible. Particular attention will be applied to any requests to access to research with potential economic value, politically and commercially sensitive material, sensitive enterprise data or data on Keele staff and students. The University will reserve the right to audit relevant partner systems and processes related to and of impact to Keele;
- Must initially be and remain consistent with the [University Strategic Plan](#) and the relevant Faculty strategies for international recruitment and partnership development, where applicable;
- Will be delivered with high quality partners who have demonstrable academic standards, an academic strategy which is complementary to Keele's, good academic reputation, a suitable organisational infrastructure, and the necessary financial and legal standing;
- Are subject to the University's quality management activities, including those set out in this Code of Practice;
- Will offer an equitable student experience for all students, regardless of the location of delivery;

- Will 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 Financial Business Case that will be reviewed at the appropriate stage, and regularly thereafter;
- Must be entered into on the expectation that, where a Keele degree is awarded, as part of a sole or joint/dual award arrangement, whether delivered by Keele or a partner, students undertake at least the minimum number of Keele credits at the level of the award as set out in the University's [Regulation E1: The University Qualifications Framework](#). For undergraduate provision this will normally mean 120 Keele credits, including at least 90 credits from their final year which includes the independent study element, such as the dissertation. For postgraduate provision, this will normally mean at least 90 Keele credits including the independent study element. Students must meet the overall credit volume requirements for the award. For any provision Keele accredits from a partner, the University must assure itself of the academic standards of this provision, have suitable oversight of assessment and adequate assurance that the provision is set at the right academic level, in line with the UK Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ);
- Must be entered into on the expectation that the degree algorithm determining the basis on which a Keele University degree is classified will be in line with the University's [Regulation D2: Progression and Classification Rules](#), and normally be based on Keele module credit only;
- Must be developed and delivered with consideration of the University's Sustainability agenda in mind, in line with the University's [Climate Action Framework Principles](#).

1.5 English Language Requirements in Educational Partnerships

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

² Delivery in a language other than English will be approved only in exceptional circumstances, for which there is a clear academic and strategic rationale, with robust frameworks established for maintaining academic quality and standards.

1.5.2 All academic English language support embedded into a programme delivered through an educational partnership must be scrutinised and approved by Keele's Language Centre, ensuring it provides a suitable level of support. If the partner's current provision does not align to the University's, the Keele Language Centre will consider using its own modules, working closely with the programme teams at Keele and the partner. Where Keele Language Centre English for Academic Purposes modules are required to be embedded in a programme, this must first be discussed with the Head of the Language Centre and the English Language Programme Director so that modules appropriate to the programme are selected for inclusion into the programme diet.

2. POLICY

2.1 Approval of Educational Partnerships

a) Overview of Partner and Partnership Approval

2.1.1 Approval arrangements for new educational partnerships will vary depending on the nature of the collaboration and are considered as part of a risk-based approach³. The following section sets out the procedures for new partnership approval, and the considerations to be made when approving new educational partnerships. Specific approval procedures for certain models of partnership are set out separately within this section. In addition to partnership approval, some new educational partnerships may also require programme approval or modification, the procedures for which are set out within the University's [Programme Approval and Programme Modification Intranet pages](#). The processes for the approval of specific models of partnership will normally apply as follows:

Type of Arrangement	Approval Process
Articulation	Partner approval by SRAG.
Co-Delivery	Partner approval by SRAG.
Dual Award	Partner approval by SRAG.
Dual PhD	Partner approval by UEC.
Franchise	Partner approval by SRAG.
Joint Award/Programme	Partner approval by SRAG.
Joint PhD	Partner approval by UEC.
Offsite Delivery/Flying Faculty	Partner approval by SRAG.
Programme Endorsement	Partner approval by SRAG and a Programme Review exercise overseen by FEC.
Split Site PhDs	Partner approval by UDAC.
Validation	Partner approval by SRAG.

b) Initial Exploration and Investigation

2.1.2 Initial enquiries as to the potential for developing a new educational partnership may be generated predominantly either through acquisition by a member of the Senior Leadership Team, an approach by a prospective partner or through acquisition by a Keele School, Faculty or Professional Service. In each case the initial proposal should be brought to the attention of the Educational Partnerships Team, who will advise on the viability of the proposal and approval route, and will work with the relevant University teams, including the Keele School, Faculty and prospective partner to further explore the proposal before further resource is committed to developing it.

2.1.3 If the Keele Faculty, School and Educational Partnerships Team agree there is scope to further explore a partnership development, a proposal can proceed to the next stage of partnership approval in accordance with the relevant approval route.

³ In some circumstances, where a proposal varies from the standard models of collaboration, the Educational Partnerships Team may agree that a variation to the approval process should be permitted. As such the final submission process and documentation requirements may vary, the Educational Partnerships Team will advise on the approval requirements during the initial exploration and investigation of a proposal.

2.1.4 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 the proposed partner/s are willing to explore ways of working together. The Educational Partnerships Team will provide the template for any MoU which must be formally signed by the designated University signatories. The MoU is not a legally-binding agreement and a formal legally-binding contract will, in most cases relating to the models of partnership defined in this Code of Practice, be required once the partnership has been approved by the University. In all cases in which an MoU is required, the Educational Partnerships Team will oversee their negotiation, checking MoU drafts before they are sent to a proposed partner and following any feedback, coordinating the approval and signatory processing once a position has been agreed.

c) The Partnership Proposal and Approval

- **New Partnership Proposal Development**

2.1.5 Following an initial viability assessment of any new partnership proposal by the Educational Partnerships Team, Phase 1 of the [New Partnership Proposal Form](#) must be completed, usually by the lead School (for example the School's Academic Lead for Internationalisation), with support from the Faculty Deans of Internationalisation and Partnerships and Educational Partnerships Team, and submitted to the Student Recruitment and Admissions Group (SRAG) for approval to proceed with further exploration into the proposed partnership and the development of a full proposal for later submission to SRAG, and, in some circumstances, the University Executive Committee (UEC).

2.1.6 The New Partnership Proposal Form is split into phases with information requests tailored to each phase and RAG rated. Phase 1, the New Partnership Initial Business Case, is designed to ensure key information is obtained in order for SRAG to make an informed judgement on the viability of a prospective partnership before further staffing resource is attributed to the development of a full proposal. In some cases, i.e. Programme Endorsement Services proposals, Phase 1 approval by SRAG is sufficient, with no need for further submission of a proposal for approval.

2.1.7 Phase 2, New Partnership Full Proposal, seeks greater exploration and detailed considerations of a prospective new partnership. Information under Phase 2 should be obtained following Phase 1 approval, through further detailed exploration of the partnership and the information gathered under Phase 1, and is necessary for the University to make a final decision on the approval of a new partnership before it proceeds to contractual negotiations and implementation. Phase 2 is normally accompanied by due diligence and risk assessment on the prospective partner and partnership, and a full Financial Business Case will normally require completing for partnership proposals classified as Collaborative Provision.

2.1.8 Phase 3 sets out the practical and operational considerations required to be thought through for a new partnership during its implementation, following University approval and prior to launch, and is designed to guide and inform the core considerations of partnership delivery and management normally set out within a partnership's operational framework.

2.1.9 During the development of Phase 1 and/or Phase 2 of a new partnership proposal, it may be beneficial in some circumstances, for example large scale Collaborative Provision partnerships with

cross-Faculty input, to establish a working group to meet regularly throughout the development of the proposal, overseeing the development of the due diligence investigations, preparations for a partner approval visit (where applicable), the development of the Financial Business Case and the design, development, approval or modification of the programme (where applicable). Membership of such working groups will be determined based on the nature of the proposal and may fluctuate dependant on the agenda but might normally include; the relevant Executive Dean/s or nominee (as chair), relevant Head of School/s, Head of Faculty Operations, Dean of Internationalisation and Partnerships, members of the wider Senior Leadership Team and a member of the Educational Partnerships Team.

2.1.10 Prior to the development of Phase 2 of a new partnership proposal, it may be necessary to put in place a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) to prevent a proposed partner from breaching confidentiality with regards 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 Director of Legal, Governance and Compliance who have responsibility for overseeing the preparation and sign-off of such agreements.

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

- **University Consultation**

2.1.12 In the development of Phase 1 and particularly Phase 2 of the New Partnership Proposal Form, it may be necessary to consult with wider University central Professional Services to fully consider the implications and potential resource requirements of a proposed partnership. The Educational Partnerships Team will advise and, in most cases, lead on the consultation process with relevant central Professional Services. The following central Professional Services may be consulted through the development process:

- the Library, to ensure access to online resources and licenses for the new and existing provision can be arranged and to assess any cost implications;
- the Project Assurance Team and/or the Director of Legal, Governance and Compliance/external legal organisation, to consider the legal jurisdiction and framework in which the partnership will operate, data sharing requirements and implications and any legal costs associated with the proposal;
- Keele Institute for Innovation in Teaching Excellence, for exploring implications to new programme design (where applicable), any potential support required to deliver a Keele award digitally and where required, professional training and development needs of any staff external to Keele who are going to be involved with the delivery or assessment of a Keele award;
- Student Records and Examinations, to consider any implications to an associated programme's infrastructure within the Student Record Management System and the status of students associated with the partnership, 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 delivery of the programme/s and partnership;

- Student Services, to ensure that any student support requirements have been considered and to assess the impact of the University's student facing policies, ensure accommodation arrangements (where applicable) have been appropriately considered, and career and employment opportunities for students associated with the programme/s (where applicable) and academic skills support for students have been fully considered;
- Information and Digital Services, to advise on access to University systems, to assess the impact on the University's digital infrastructure and any developments to the University's digital services required as part of the proposal and ensure appropriate licenses, software and hardware are in place in advance of the first intake;
- Directorate of Finance, to ensure that all relevant taxation, fee transfer and costing considerations are taken into account in the development of the Financial Business Case and operation of the partnership;
- Human Resources, to ensure that any staffing implications of the proposal, particularly in models of collaboration that require staff recruitment overseas, or flying faculty or where it is intended to grant partner staff an associate staff status, are given due consideration;
- Estates and Campus Services, to ensure there is awareness of new partnership developments where these have impact on facilities or resources on campus, and necessary arrangements can be factored into planning processes;
- KeeleSU and KPA, 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 and student voice, engagement and feedback frameworks for the partnership are appropriate;
- Keele Language Centre, to advise on the language of delivery of a programme to be delivered in partnership, what Keele language provision may need to be delivered, ensure that consideration is given to English language skills of prospective students and to consider the language ability and qualifications of teaching staff delivering the University's provision;
- Immigration Compliance and Advice Team, to advise on any immigration/visa requirements as part of 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 agree the entry requirements of the associated programme/s and to agree the admissions processes for the partnership, including partnership arrangements where students transfer to the University.
- Quality Assurance Team, to confirm requirements for programme modification or new programme design, development and approval (where applicable) and to advise on credit frameworks, and any other matters relating to quality assurance and standards.
- Global Opportunities Team, to consider whether student mobility, or short course/summer school arrangements might be embedded within the partnership, and to consider the practical arrangements to do this, ensuring that consideration for broader

internationalisation is embedded in the exploratory discussions and new partnership proposals from the outset.

- **The Financial Business Case**

2.1.13 A full Financial Business Case is required for all partnerships classified as Collaborative Provision taken through Phase 2 of the New Partnership Proposal Form. The full Financial Business Case builds on the Initial Business Case set out in Phase 1 of the New Partnership Proposal Form and is submitted alongside the New Partnership Proposal Form and due diligence and risk assessment to SRAG, and in some cases, UEC for final approval. The Financial Business Case provides in greater detail a view as to the financial viability of the partnership proposal, incorporating staffing pay costs within the Faculty and, where necessary, central Professional Services, required to deliver and support the partnership, and any non-pay costs including possible legal fees and a partner approval visit (where applicable). The full Financial Business Case will normally be developed by the Head of Faculty Operations or in cases where more than one Faculty is involved, jointly by Heads of Faculty Operations concerned with the proposal, with input from the Keele Directorate of Finance.

- **Due Diligence and Risk Assessment**

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

2.1.15 The due diligence process is coordinated centrally by the Educational Partnerships Team following the approval of Phase 1 of the New Partnership Proposal Form. The Educational Partnerships Team which will undertake desk-based research, working with the prospective partner to collate the responses and documentation required to conduct a thorough assessment of the prospective partner, according to the relevant [Due Diligence Questionnaire](#), and seek external specialist advice where necessary. A shorter, reduced Due Diligence Questionnaire will be used for some proposals, for example those involving UK higher education institutions with degree awarding powers and proposals modelled on Programme Endorsement Services.

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

2.1.17 Following the review of the prospective partner's due diligence submission, and any necessary consultation, the Educational Partnerships Team will develop a formal risk assessment in line with the University's [Risk Management Policy](#), which will set out any established risks and proposed mitigations, with each risk assigned a RAG rated risk score. The risk assessment will be submitted to SRAG alongside Phase 2 of the New Partnership Proposal Form and continue to be monitored throughout the term of a partnership by the Educational Partnerships Committee (EPC) and through annual monitoring exercises, with EPC reporting into the University's central Risk and Compliance Group on a regular basis. Where a substantial number of risks are determined without suitable mitigation strategies, external legal and/or financial advice may be sought and this may then require further consideration at UEC before a decision on the approval of a new partnership is made. Where risk remains unmitigated, or high regardless of the mitigation in place, UEC will normally make the final decision on the approval of a new partnership.

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

- **Partner Approval Visit**

2.1.19 For large scale, high-risk educational partnership proposals classified as Collaborative Provision and strategic partnerships at an institutional level, a partner approval visit may be required, undertaken either physically through travel to the prospective partner, or via an online event, during the development of the Phase 2 New Partnership Proposal and prior to final SRAG, and in some cases, UEC approval. Informed through outcomes of due diligence on the prospective partner and the risk assessment, the Educational Partnerships Team and Pro Vice-Chancellor International, in consultation with the relevant Faculty Executive Dean/s, will jointly determine whether a partner approval visit is necessary and if so, whether this is undertaken through a physical visit or via an online event.

2.1.20 Regardless of whether the visit is undertaken physically or digitally, a Keele delegation or panel will be appointed by the Pro Vice-Chancellor International on the recommendation of the Educational Partnerships Team. The associated costs of a physical visit should be recorded in the Financial Business Case under approval costs. Whilst it would normally be expected that a partnership approval visit takes place prior to the final submission of a proposal to SRAG (and in some cases, UEC), thus allowing findings of the visit to be reflected in the proposal considered, in some exceptional circumstances a visit may be postponed until after SRAG (and in some cases, UEC) has considered a partnership proposal. In such circumstances, it would normally be expected that SRAG (and in some cases, UEC) provides provisional approval, pending the findings of an approval visit. Regardless as to whether a partner approval visit takes place, thorough due diligence must be undertaken, and a risk assessment generated, prior to SRAG (and in some cases, UEC) considering Phase 2 of the New Partnership Proposal for approval.

2.1.21 Where a partner approval visit is deemed necessary, the delegation or panel from the University will provide an independent view whether the proposed partner can provide an appropriate learning environment, a high standard of teaching and student support and a satisfactory level of physical resources for the delivery of the Keele award(s). The delegation or panel will not normally be required to comment in detail on programme-specific resources as this

information will be provided by the Keele School and Faculty, based on exploratory discussions with the prospective partner, and will be explored further through the New Partnership Proposal Form. At least half of the internal members of the deputation or panel must not previously have been involved in the planning and development of the proposed arrangement. Members of the deputation or panel should include staff who are able to provide expertise in relation to academic, quality assurance and/or international collaboration (where appropriate). The number of staff conducting a visit or participating as part of a digital panel will depend upon the complexity of the proposed arrangement and the level of risk and will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Pro Vice-Chancellor International and Educational Partnerships Team, although there will normally be at least three participating members.

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

2.1.23 The final approval of the proposed partner and partnership rests with SRAG, unless risks determined through the risk assessment remain unmitigated, or high regardless of the mitigation in place, in which case UEC will normally make the final decision on the approval of a new partnership. The deputation or panel will produce a written summary or full written report setting out the findings of the visit and may contain recommendations and conditions for further work to be undertaken before the final proposal is ready to be considered by SRAG (and in some cases, UEC) for approval.

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

- **Partnership Approval**

2.1.25 The information requirements set out within the New Partnership Proposal Form are designed to provide the University with the necessary understanding of the nature of the proposal, the risks associated with it, the rationale for pursuing it and resource attributed to its delivery and ongoing management. For Programme Endorsement Services partnership proposals, Phase 1 approval by SRAG is sufficient, with no need for further submission of a proposal via Phase 2 for approval. SRAG approval is normally required for partnerships classified as Collaborative Provision, with other strategic partnerships at an institutional level considered through UEC. The approval route of such institutional partnerships will be considered by UEC, with UEC determining the appropriate approval route where a deviation to this Code may be deemed necessary, i.e. a proposal of sufficient scale and risk that may require approval by University Senate and/or University Council.

2.1.26 All proposals for new educational partnerships and those classified as Collaborative Provision must have the full support of the relevant Faculty Executive Dean/s and Pro Vice-Chancellor International. It is the joint responsibility of the Executive Dean/s and Pro Vice-Chancellor International to present the proposal to SRAG (or in some cases, UEC) for consideration. SRAG (or in some cases, UEC) will consider the information about the prospective partner and the proposed model of collaboration in a strategic context and assess the proposal on its opportunities and risks. If SRAG (or in some cases, UEC) is of the view that the proposal is in line with the University's Strategic Plan, educational and research portfolio and ambitions, wider strategic plans for student recruitment, international growth and, based on the available information, likely to be financially viable, with sufficient risk mitigation in place, a partnership proposal may be approved. Where SRAG (or in some cases, UEC) require further information to be gathered or elements of a proposal to be clarified, a proposal may be re-submitted at a later stage once the requirements of SRAG (or in some cases, UEC) have been met.

2.1.27 Documentary requirements for the final submission of new partnerships proposals include the following:

- a) New Partnership Proposal Form (Phases 1 and 2 completed);
- b) Financial Business Case;
- c) Risk Assessment;
- d) Partner Approval Visit Report (where applicable).

- **Programme Endorsement Services Programme Review**

2.1.28 For Programme Endorsement Services arrangements, the lead Keele School should use the Keele [Programme Endorsement Services Review Form](#) to review an external organisation's programme in line with the relevant model of endorsement services proposed. The programme review for Programme Endorsement Services arrangements should be submitted by the Keele School to their Faculty Education Committee (FEC) for approval and must be reviewed annually by FEC. FEC approval should be sought prior to Phase 1 of the New Partnership Proposal Form being submitted for approval to SRAG.

d) Split Site PhD Approval

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

2.1.30 Once endorsed in principle, the [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 existing expertise in both the University and proposed partner 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 funding is in place to support the arrangement. The Educational Partnerships Team and KDA will advise on the most appropriate model for collaboration, based on what the School and/or Faculty aim to achieve through partnership. The main principle of a Split Site PhD partnership is that there is a reliance on the partner for the student to complete their research, for example in the form of supervision or facilities, where students will spend a significant proportion of their time.

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

2.1.31 The Split Site PhD Proposal Form includes a Financial Business Case that should be completed by the Faculty or lead School, setting out clearly how the Split Site PhD arrangement is funded, whether fee waivers might apply, and if so, how this would impact on the costs of supporting 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 fees to Keele will need to be set at a level to ensure that the University can meet its obligations as the awarding body. Tuition fees due to Keele may be arranged flexibly for each partnership and will be regulated through a legal agreement between the University and partner/s.

2.1.32 The Split Site PhD Proposal Form must be supported by the Faculty's Executive Dean as well as the Head of Faculty Operations before it is submitted by the Faculty or lead School for scrutiny to the Faculty PGR Committee. Provided the Faculty PGR Committee are supportive of the proposal, the Split Site PhD Proposal Form should be submitted to the University Doctoral Academy Committee (UDAC) for approval. UDAC will consider the information about the prospective partner and the proposed collaboration in a strategic context and assess the proposal on its opportunities and risks. UDAC will approve the proposal if it is in line with the [University's Strategic Plan](#) and wider research agenda and, based on the available information, likely to be financially viable and a valuable addition to the University's academic and research portfolios.

2.1.33 SRAG 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 UDAC.

e) Joint and Dual PhD Award Approval

2.1.34 For Joint and Dual PhD partnerships, the corresponding Faculty's Dean of Research, Dean of Internationalisation and Partnerships, Educational Partnerships Team and the KDA should first be consulted regarding any new potential proposals and will advise on the model of partnership. If it is confirmed that there is scope to develop a formal proposal for either a Joint or Dual PhD arrangement, the Faculty Executive Dean and University's Pro Vice-Chancellor International and Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation should be consulted to ensure a proposal is endorsed in principle. There may also be circumstances in which the University's Pro Vice-Chancellor International and Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation bring forward new Joint and Dual

PhD partnerships for consideration, in such circumstances, these partnerships will be considered in consultation with the Educational Partnerships Team and KDA, as well as the Faculty's Dean of Research, Dean of Internationalisation and Partnerships and Faculty Executive Dean.

2.1.35 Once scope to further develop a formal proposal has been confirmed, the [Joint & Dual PhD Proposal Form](#) should be completed by the School and/or Faculty, setting out in detail the proposal, regulatory and supervisory arrangements and outline the strategic value to the University and to the University's research agenda. In addition, due diligence should be carried out on the prospective partner with outcomes fed into the Joint & Dual PhD Proposal Form. A Financial Business Case will also be required, and 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. Proposals will not normally be considered unless it can be demonstrated that there is sufficient funding in place to support the arrangement, or that sufficient student numbers are achievable to make the arrangement financially viable and secure.

2.1.36 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 Financial Business Case and the development of the regulatory framework in which students will be expected to conduct their research and awards be issued. Membership of such working groups will be determined based on the nature of the proposal and may fluctuate dependant on the agenda, but might normally include; the Faculty Executive Dean or Dean of Research or nominee (as chair), Head of relevant School(s), Head of Faculty Operations, Dean of Internationalisation and Partnerships, KDA Director or nominee, members of the wider Senior Leadership Team and a member of the Educational Partnerships Team.

2.1.37 The Joint & Dual PhD Proposal Form, Financial Business Case and risk assessment informed through due diligence should be scrutinised and supported by the Faculty PGR Committee and UDAC prior to submission to UEC for approval. Proposals will be presented to UEC by the Faculty Executive Dean and Pro Vice-Chancellor International. UEC will consider the information about the prospective partner and the proposed collaboration in a strategic and business context and assess the proposal on its opportunities and risks. UEC will approve the proposal if it is in line with the [University's Strategic Plan](#) and wider research agenda and, based on the available information, likely to be financially viable and a valuable addition to the University's academic and research portfolios.

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

2.1.39 SRAG will not normally scrutinise PGR partnership proposals, but will receive a record of all new Joint and Dual PhD partnership proposals that have been approved by UEC.

f) Programme Endorsement Services Approval

2.1.40 Initial enquiries as to the potential for endorsing an element of an external organisation's provision may be generated predominantly either through an approach by a prospective external

organisation or through acquisition by a Keele School, Faculty or Professional Service. Where the endorsement service relates to an external organisation's programme or academic provision, any approach by an external organisation should be referred to the relevant Keele School. The Keele School will liaise with the organisation to explore more thoroughly the organisation's aims. Where an approach by an external organisation relates to the endorsement of a particular service, or the organisation itself, this will be considered by the University's Strategic Communications and Brand Directorate and the relevant Professional Service the proposed endorsed service best aligns to.

2.1.41 The following approval process refers to the endorsement of an external organisation's programme and academic provision. Upon exploration of an external organisation's proposal, the relevant Keele School will consult with the Educational Partnerships Team to confirm the viability of the proposal. Upon confirmation by the Educational Partnerships Team of the viability of the proposal, the external organisation will be required to complete a [Due Diligence Questionnaire](#) determined by the Educational Partnerships Team, which will then assess the external organisation's due diligence responses and where required, evidence, to determine any inherent risks in the endorsement of an external organisation's provision and the legal, financial and reputational standing of the external organisation.

2.1.42 On the basis of a successful due diligence assessment, the Educational Partnerships Team will confirm with the School they may proceed to the next stage of approval. The School will be required to review the external organisation's provision, completing the Keele [Programme Endorsement Services Review Form](#) and submitting it to the relevant Faculty Education Committee for approval. The Faculty Education Committee will review the Programme Endorsement Services Review Form to ensure that the provision to be endorsed by the University meets expected quality and standards, in line with the University's own provision. The Faculty Education Committee may require further information or action to be undertaken by the external organisation prior to granting approval of the endorsement service, for which the School and external organisation must comply with.

2.1.43 Once the Programme Endorsement Services Review Form has been approved by the Faculty Education Committee, the School will be required to complete Phase 1 of the [New Partnership Proposal Form](#) for approval by SRAG. Where a fee is associated with the endorsement service, paid by the external organisation, the School may require approval from the Faculty's Executive Dean and Head of Faculty Operations before any review activity is undertaken.

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

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

g) Articulation Partnerships Approval

2.1.46 New proposals brought forward for Articulation arrangements should be referred initially to the Educational Partnerships Team. Where a new proposal is aligned to the University's key strategic recruitment markets, the Educational Partnerships Team will liaise with the Global Student Recruitment and Access Team within the Global Student Recruitment and Admissions Directorate at Keele.

2.1.47 Where the Global Student Recruitment and Access Team consider a proposal to have scope for increasing recruitment in the key strategic recruitment market, consultation will take place between the Global Student Recruitment and Access Team, relevant School and Faculty as to whether the proposed partnership has broader scope for expansion beyond the initial Articulation arrangement proposed or if the proposed partnership is to be entered into purely on the basis of increasing on-campus recruitment.

2.1.48 Following an initial exploration of an Articulation proposal, the Educational Partnerships Team, and, where a proposal aligns to the University's key strategic recruitment markets, together with the Global Student Recruitment and Access Team will liaise with the relevant School and Faculty Dean of Internationalisation and Partnerships, to determine whether there is support for the partnership within the School and Faculty, and to consider any academic considerations that may need to be taken into account from the outset, for example, whether the proposed destination programme at Keele has capacity to accept students, there are any Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements on the programme that may prohibit the proposed partnership.

2.1.49 Upon confirmation by the Keele School and Faculty that there is support for the partnership and following any considerations regarding the practical elements of the proposed partnership, in consultation where required with other central Professional Services, the Educational Partnerships Team and School will liaise with the proposed partner, with the School carrying out a curriculum mapping exercise using the [Curriculum Mapping for Articulation Partnerships Form](#). The Educational Partnerships Team will also undertake due diligence on the proposed partner and partnership.

2.1.50 It may at this stage be necessary to establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the University and the proposed partner/s. The MoU is a non-binding statement of intent which indicates that the University and the proposed partner/s are willing to explore ways of working together. The Educational Partnerships Team will lead on the generation and negotiation of the MoU using Keele's standardised template, which must be formally signed by the designated University signatories. Any major deviation to the template through negotiations with the prospective partner, such as utilising the partner's template, or the deletion of existing clauses, must

be approved by the University's Project Assurance Team. The MoU is not a legally-binding agreement and a formal contract will therefore also be required once the partnership has been approved. In all cases in which an MoU is required, the Educational Partnerships Team will oversee their negotiation, however, where the proposed partner/s seek amendments to the MoU template, these amendments should be checked by the Project Assurance Team prior to coordinating the approval and signatory processing once a position has been agreed. The Educational Partnerships Team will coordinate signatory processing once a final position on the MoU has been confirmed and the MoU once fully executed submitted to the Project Assurance Team for their records.

2.1.51 A detailed curriculum mapping exercise, using the Curriculum Mapping for Articulation Partnerships⁴ is required prior to the partnership being submitted for approval. The Keele School will produce the mapping in liaison with the proposed 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 and give consideration to the assessment, learning and teaching methods implemented by the proposed partner, as well as entrance requirements and the relationship to subject benchmark statements to ensure that the academic standards of the overall award are maintained. Curriculum mapping for Articulation arrangements should be submitted by the Keele School to their Faculty Education Committee (FEC) for approval⁵, and must be reviewed annually by FEC.

2.1.52 Following successful approval of the curriculum mapping by the Keele School, and subject to satisfactory due diligence outcomes, the Educational Partnerships Team will then coordinate with the School and Faculty's Dean of Internationalisation and Partnerships, the completion of the [Articulation Partnership Proposal Form](#), which, once complete, will be submitted by the Educational Partnerships Team to SRAG for approval. All proposals for new educational partnerships and those classified as Collaborative Provision must have the full support of the relevant Faculty Executive Dean/s and Pro Vice-Chancellor International. It is the joint responsibility of the Executive Dean/s and Pro Vice-Chancellor International to present the proposal to SRAG for consideration.

2.1.53 Once a new Articulation partnership has been approved by SRAG, the Educational Partnerships Team will draft a new legal agreement, using the University's template for Articulation arrangements. The Educational Partnerships Team will coordinate and oversee the negotiation of the legal agreement, however, where the proposed partner/s seek amendments to the template, these amendments should be checked by the Project Assurance Team prior to coordinating the approval and signatory processing once a position has been agreed. The Educational Partnerships Team and Project Assurance Team will coordinate signatory processing once a final position on the legal agreement has been confirmed, and the legal agreement once fully executed submitted to the Project Assurance Team for their records.

⁴ The Curriculum Mapping for Articulation Partnerships Template is maintained by the Educational Partnerships Team in Academic Registry and can be accessed via the [Educational Partnerships Team Intranet Pages](#).

⁵ In some circumstances timeframes may not allow for curriculum mapping to be considered at a scheduled meeting of FEC, in such instances, the School should circulate the mapping to FEC members virtually and seek Chairs approval following any comments from FEC that may need to be addressed.

h) Programme Approval and Modification

2.1.54 Where the new partnership involves a new taught programme, either developed by Keele or by the partner or jointly by both, the new programme will undergo a programme approval 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, however, in cases where this is not possible, a programme must be approved by the University prior to its launch. New programmes offered in collaboration with a partner through a model classified as Collaborative Provision will always be considered through approval category 3, involving a standing validation panel, in accordance with the University's [Programme Approval and Programme Modification Intranet pages](#).

2.1.55 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 Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) accreditation or work with the partner organisation to secure PSRB approval. Equally, where an existing Keele programme which is recognised or accredited by a PSRB is franchised or delivered away from the University as part of a collaboration with a partner, i.e. through a model of Collaborative Provision, it has to be established prior to final approval by SRAG (or in some cases, UEC) whether the recognition or accreditation will be extended to the programme and if any action is required to meet these standards. Costs associated with this activity will be included in the Financial Business Case.

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

2.2 Management of Educational Partnerships

a) Legal Agreements

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

b) Implementation and Preparation for Delivery

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

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

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

c) The Operational Handbook

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

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

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

2.2.12 The Educational Partnerships Team will liaise with the partner, the relevant Keele Faculty Operations Team, School and central Professional Services to develop the Operational Handbook. The first Operational Handbook will be signed off by the Joint Steering Committee for the partnership (or equivalent), where possible, before teaching commences, and it will be updated annually by the Educational Partnerships Team, the partner, Keele Faculty Operations Team and the School. The Joint Steering Committee (or equivalent) is responsible for monitoring the release of appropriate resources to ensure that the processes set out in the Operational Handbook can operate as described.

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

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

d) Governance Arrangements

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

2.2.16 **University Executive Committee (UEC)**, or, on its nomination, the Student Recruitment and Admissions Group, is responsible for granting approval of educational partnerships classified as Collaborative Provision, particularly in cases where a proposal is identified as high risk following a risk assessment of the new partnership and where mitigation strategies are not considered to fully mitigate the risk. In such cases, UEC will consider in detail a proposal for a new partnership classified as Collaborative Provision and make an assessment, based on the evidence and analysis provided

within the partnership proposal as to the impact of the risks posed, as well as the broader suitability, financial viability and strategic fit of the prospective partner and partnership.

2.2.17 Student Recruitment and Admissions Group (SRAG) is responsible for coordinating the development of international partnerships, aligned to the University's strategic ambitions for international student recruitment and portfolio development. SRAG provides an initial assessment of the viability of new proposals to develop an educational partnership, in line with the procedures set out in this Code. It is responsible for granting final approval of educational partnerships classified as Collaborative Provision, considering in detail all proposals for new partnerships classified as Collaborative Provision and making an assessment, based on the evidence and analysis provided within the partnership proposal as to the suitability, financial viability and strategic fit of the prospective partner and partnership. It is also responsible for approving low risk educational partnerships such as Articulation arrangements and Programme Endorsement Services arrangements and will note the approval and monitor the performance of recruitment-based partnerships such as Progression arrangements. SRAG also approves the expansion of existing partnerships classified as Collaborative Provision.

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

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

2.2.20 Faculty Education Committees (FEC), operate for each Keele Faculty, with responsibility for overseeing the education activities, programme enhancement and student experience delivered across the Faculty, in line with the University's broader educational aims. For educational partnerships, FEC receives and approves programme review activities in relation to Programme Endorsement Services arrangements, and oversees the academic teach out plans following the termination or withdrawal of a partnership. FEC may be consulted on other elements of programme delivery and the student experience through educational partnerships and approving major modifications and new taught modules introduced to programmes delivered through an educational partnership.

2.2.21 For educational partnerships classified as Collaborative Provision, such as Franchise, Validation, Joint and Dual Award and Co-Delivery taught partnerships, the University will normally put in place the standard governance structure set out below. Modified arrangements based on this model may apply dependant on the scale and complexity of the partnership and any in-country requirements, and will normally be set out in the legal agreement or Operational Handbook. There

should however always be an appropriate and holistic governance structure in place enabling effective oversight of the partnership by the University and partner/s.

- **Joint Steering Committee**

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

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

2.2.24 The Terms of Reference and membership of the Joint Steering Committee will be set out in the Operational Handbook for each partnership. Joint Steering Committees may also be established for other types of 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 partnership arrangement and any specific in-country requirements stipulated by the regulatory bodies of a particular partner.

- **Joint Board of Studies**

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

2.2.25 The membership of the Joint Board of Studies will normally consist of the Link Tutor/Programme Director(s) (in the chair), a member of the Educational Partnerships Team, and other University staff involved in the coordination and delivery of the partnership, and the management and delivery of the programme/s as appropriate, such as Faculty Operations Teams,

central Professional Services and other Keele academic staff. Membership from the partner/s will reflect that of Keele, as appropriate. The Terms of Reference and membership of the Joint Board of Studies will be set out in the Operational Handbook.

- **Board of Examiners**

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

- **Student Staff Voice Committee**

2.2.27 For all educational partnerships classified as Collaborative Provision modelled on a Franchise, Validation, Joint/Dual Award and Co-Delivery arrangement at an undergraduate and postgraduate taught level, a forum will be established to facilitate opportunities for students and student representatives to meet with academic staff at Keele and the partner, including the relevant Programme Leader at the partner and the Keele Link Tutor/Programme Director. Such a forum may incorporate expectations from the partner but should at a minimum provide the same opportunities for students to engage with their programme team and provide feedback on their educational and social experience as those provided through Student Staff Voice Committees (SSVC) at Keele. The SSVC (or equivalent) will normally meet at least twice per year, with the Keele Link Tutor/Programme Director an ex officio member who may attend any meeting or may request that a meeting is held. Formal mechanisms adopted to facilitate student engagement and feedback will be set out in the Operational Handbook for each partnership and be publicised to students, normally through a Student Handbook.

e) Student Voice, Engagement and Feedback

2.2.28 The University values and places importance in facilitating opportunities for students to take an active role in their learning and shaping their educational and social experience. Regardless of the model of partnership, the following principles should be applied for all students associated to an educational partnership, regardless of where they study:

- there is a formal means through which staff and students can regularly communicate on all issues affecting the student experience either through personal comment or via a representative;
- there are effective mechanisms for logging and responding to issues raised by students, reporting back on actions taken or reasons why no action is taken;

- the Student Union (or equivalent) at the partner and at Keele is properly informed of activities relating to student voice and representation and opportunities are extended for them to actively engage;
- There are opportunities for students to feedback on and actively engage in their social and educational experience, contributing their feedback, with their feedback considered as a minimum in the following areas:
 - curriculum design and development (both module and programme);
 - the suitability and accessibility of learning resources and programme materials;
 - academic support, including library services as well as pastoral care and other forms of learning, language and study skills support;
 - the quality of information and documentation made available;
 - recruitment, selection and admissions procedures;
 - the quality of feedback, i.e. on formative and summative assessment.

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

f) Approval of Teaching Staff

2.2.30 Where academic staff employed by and based at an approved partner are involved in the teaching and assessment of Keele credit-bearing academic provision, each individual member of the teaching staff will require approval from the University before they can commence teaching. The lead Keele School would normally be expected to approve individual teaching staff, ensuring that they are suitably experienced and qualified to teach on the respective programme. This will normally require a review of staff CVs but may also require involvement in the recruitment and selection process by the School. 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.

2.2.31 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/Programme Director. When approved, partner staff will normally be granted the title of 'Associate Tutor' and set up with specific access to access various University systems and online learning resources. Such access may depend on additional security checks carried out at the time and may require the member of staff to prove their identity prior to access being granted. All staff when granted access to University systems and online learning resources are expected to abide by the University's conditions of use, and associated regulations and policies. Where the Link Tutor/Programme Director is asked to contribute to the appointment process at the partner institution, approval for the new appointments is still required.

g) Staff Induction and Staff Development

2.2.32 The University is committed to increasing the internationalisation of its staff, working with partners to facilitate multi-faceted collaboration, and, where appropriate, will explore and assist with the professional development of staff based at partner institutions. For partnerships classified as Collaborative Provision, Link Tutors/programme Directors play a key role in the training of academic staff based at the partner, on relevant University regulations, policies, systems and processes. As a minimum, staff based at partner institutions delivering an element of Keele academic provision will be expected to participate in appropriately designated induction and training activities in order to effectively carry out their role and ensure clarity on the University's expectations in the delivery of its academic provision. Academic staff at the University are also encouraged to enhance their scholarly activities together with academic staff based at partner institutions and the University will actively work with its partners to explore and facilitate opportunities to collaborate at this level, with the aim of fostering an open and supportive environment for its staff to engage internationally.

2.2.33 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). 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.

2.2.34 Further information and expectations for staff training will be outlined in the Operational Handbook for each partnership, with staff development opportunities explored separately between the partner, Keele Faculty and School and central Professional Services.

h) Monitoring and Approval of Public Information

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

2.2.36 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 a programme the University and partner collaborate on;
- are used to attract funding or other support from public or private sector sources;
- are used to inform the general public.

i) The Link Tutor/Programme Director

2.2.37 For partnerships classified as Collaborative Provision, a Link Tutor/Programme Director will be appointed for each programme by the associated School, acting as the main academic contact for the programme. Where a School is linked to more than one programme delivered through an educational partnership, discretion may be used regarding whether there should be a single Link

Tutor/Programme Director for all programmes, or Link Tutors/Programme Directors appointed for each individual programme. Equally, if a partner institution has arrangements with more than one School at Keele, it should be agreed at the outset if this arrangement merits one or more Link Tutors/Programme Directors. Such arrangements will then be costed into the Financial Business Case at the partnership approval stage and set out in the Operational Handbook. It is the responsibility of the School, in its contributions to the Financial Business Case for the partnership, to identify a suitably experienced member of academic staff as Link Tutor/Programme Director and factor in an appropriate allocation of time for the Link Tutor/Programme Director to carry out their role. Faculties, Schools and the member of staff appointed as a Link Tutor/Programme Director should work in accordance with the [Educational Partnerships – Roles and Responsibilities of Faculties and Schools](#) guidance. Dependant on the size, nature and geographical location of the partnership, the Educational Partnerships Team will advise on the suggested workload allocation for Link Tutors/Programme Directors, however, Schools should be aware that even small partnerships will make certain demands on the Link Tutor/Programme Director which cannot be scaled down. Therefore, this commitment should be carefully considered by the School during the development of a new partnership proposal.

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

j) Assessment, Marking and Moderation

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

k) Management of the Student Record

2.2.40 During the exploration and development of a new partnership proposal, it should be determined at what stage students will be formally registered with the University. Registration must be considered in liaison with the Educational Partnerships Team and Student Records and Examinations Team and would normally only be permitted at the point in which students begin to study Keele provision specifically, whether credit bearing or non-credit bearing. Once a registered

student of the University, the [University's Regulation C1: Maximum Periods of Registration](#) will apply. Student registration should also be considered alongside any requirements of the partner/s, with enrolment and re-registration processes considered during the implementation of a new educational partnership.

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

I) Information and Digital Management

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

m) Split Site PhD Management

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

2.2.44 The University will permit a degree of flexibility with regards to the time spent by students at Keele and the level of tuition fee payable to Keele, however, the minimum period of residence at Keele should normally be no less than 12 months in total, but may be divided up into discontinuous periods, subject to visa considerations. For the time spent at Keele, normally full, applicable fees are payable to the University. The level of tuition fee payable to Keele for other periods is determined on a case-by-case basis and reflected in the financial and resource assessment within the Split Site PhD Proposal Form.

2.2.45 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 [Postgraduate Research Degrees 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.

2.2.46 Students will undertake research training at Keele and the partner/s and follow the normal stages of a Keele research degree, including progression points, as prescribed in the PGR Code of Practice.

2.2.47 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.

n) Joint and Dual PhD Management

2.2.48 For Joint and Dual PhD arrangements specific requirements must be considered as set out below. The University will permit a degree of flexibility with regards to the time spent by students at Keele and the level of tuition fee payable to Keele, however, the minimum period of residence at Keele should normally be no less than 12 months in total, but can be divided up into discontinuous periods, subject to visa considerations.

2.2.49 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.

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

2.2.51 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 examiner candidate. For Dual PhD arrangements each institution will normally coordinate its own separate examination arrangements. Students will need to complete both in order to be awarded a degree.

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

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

o) Articulation Management

2.2.54 The Educational Partnerships Team are responsible for ensuring the appropriate operational measures are coordinated with and carried out by relevant central Professional Services at Keele to facilitate articulation partnerships and specific arrangements for each partnership set out within the legal agreement. This may include, but is not limited to;

- informing the Keele Admissions Team within the Global Student Recruitment and Admissions Directorate at Keele of the partnership and ensuring that appropriate mechanisms for coordinating student admission are implemented;
- if the partnership arrangement includes any fee discounts or scholarships, any such fee reductions and conditions for them will be specifically communicated to the University's Admissions and Finance teams;
- liaising with the Keele Immigration Compliance and Advice Team to ensure sufficient allocation of Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) can be made, and that all visa considerations have been implemented;
- liaising with the Keele Student Records and Examinations Team to ensure any considerations with regards enrolment at the point students transfer to the Keele programme are made, and to ensure any considerations to a student's record with regards to credit exemption are accurately recorded on the Keele Student Record Management System;
- liaising with Keele Accommodation Services within Keele's Student Services regarding accommodation arrangements for students at the point students transfer to the Keele programme.

2.2.55 Once the partnership is established, for partnerships aligned to the University's key strategic recruitment markets, the Global Student Recruitment and Access Team will work with the partner and/or agents to ensure sufficient promotion of the opportunity to transfer to Keele is made to students at the partner. This will normally result in a specific promotional plan being drawn up by the Global Student Recruitment and Access Team setting out clear activities to facilitate promotion.

p) Certification and Awards

2.2.56 For all educational partnerships the production of certificates and transcripts for Keele awards 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 Joint Awards in circumstances where the process for producing and issuing a shared certificate will be specified in the legal agreement. The wording of any documents confirming awards must be approved by the University. The University's transcripts (and HEAR) and, wherever possible, the degree certificates will clearly indicate the location and language of study as well as the name of any partner involved in the delivery where this makes up at least 120 credits of the student's programme.

2.3 Monitoring and Review of Educational Partnerships

a) Annual Partnership Review

2.3.1 Educational partnerships classified as Collaborative Provision and modelled on a Validation, Franchise, Joint and Dual Award and Co-Delivery arrangement at undergraduate and postgraduate taught level, 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 Educational Partnerships Team, with the expectation that the partner completes the report by October.

2.3.2 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 UK sector-recognised standards and those set by the Office for Students (OfS) for registered providers in England;
- to identify and reflect on any feedback and/or concerns arising from external examiner reports, student, staff and stakeholder feedback, the suitability of entry criteria, and trends in academic achievement and student retention;
- to assess the overall performance of the partnership with regards to recruitment, student attendance, engagement, achievement and retention, staff resource and development, and that the partnership continues to meet its original aims, identifying any areas for enhancement and using the review to drive forward improvements where required.

2.3.3 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. Completed Annual Partnership Review Forms will be submitted to the Educational Partnerships Committee (EPC), and normally considered at its first autumn meeting of the new academic year. Where EPC identifies any good practice, this will be disseminated to relevant University stakeholders by the Educational Partnerships Team, who may work with relevant Faculties and Schools to consider how such practice could be embedded in other partnerships. Where EPC identifies any concerning trends or general concerns, these will be communicated to relevant University stakeholders and the partner to further explore, with an expectation, where deemed necessary, any actions to remedy the concerns are addressed throughout the academic year. Where this is the case, the governance structures established for the partnership will be expected to oversee the implementation of identified actions, reporting regularly into EPC, which will continue to monitor the delivery and effectiveness of the actions until remedied.

b) Annual Strategic Performance Review

2.3.4 Faculties, with input from Schools and Link Tutors/Programme Directors, are required to complete an Annual Strategic Performance Review of all active educational partnerships classified as

Collaborative Provision modelled on a Validation, Franchise, Joint and Dual Award and Co-Delivery arrangement at undergraduate and postgraduate taught level on an annual basis assessing the ongoing strategic benefits of the partnership through key performance metrics, identified and potential risk areas and continued alignment with UK sector wide quality and standards expectations, including those set by the OfS in England, and the ongoing financial viability of the partnership. Between July and December, each Faculty with active educational partnerships classified as Collaborative Provision and that fit the criteria for Annual Strategic Performance Review, will be required to complete the [Annual Strategic Performance Review Form](#). The Annual Strategic Performance Reviews will then be considered by EPC in January for consideration followed by the Student Recruitment and Admissions Group (SRAG), which may escalate any key findings as necessary to the University Executive Committee (UEC).

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

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

c) Review of Programme Endorsement Services

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

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

d) Articulation Arrangements

2.3.9 Articulation partnerships will be monitored annually by the Educational Partnerships Team at Keele to ensure that the obligations of each partner within the legal agreement are being met, not least with regards to students transferring to Keele.

2.3.10 The Educational Partnerships Team will report to SRAG with regards to the performance of Articulation partnerships on an annual basis, providing performance data against the expectations set out in the legal agreement, for example with regards to transfer rates to Keele and student performance and achievement on the Keele programme students have transferred into.

2.3.11 Schools will carry out an annual review of the partner's academic provision referring to the original Curriculum Mapping for Articulation Partnerships Form and updating this where required, working with the partner to ensure any amendments to the partner's feeder programme and the impact to those changes have been considered. Schools will be expected to submit any revisions to their respective FEC for approval.

2.3.12 Prior to the expiry of the legal agreement, the Educational Partnerships Team will liaise with the relevant School and Faculty Dean of Internationalisation and Partnerships (and Global Student Recruitment and Access Team for Articulation partnerships aligned to the University's key strategic recruitment markets), to determine whether there is continued support for the partnership within the School and Faculty, taking into consideration performance of the partnership based on the obligations and expectations set out in the legal agreement, for example with regards to transfer rates to Keele and student performance and achievement on the Keele programme students have transferred into. Following an assessment of the partnership's performance, where it is considered by the Educational Partnerships Team, relevant School and Faculty (and Global Student Recruitment and Access Team for Articulation partnerships aligned to the University's key strategic recruitment markets), that the partnership continues to perform in line with its original aims, a proposal to extend the legal agreement will be submitted to SRAG for approval. Subject to approval from SRAG, the legal agreement may be extended or a new legal agreement entered into, following negotiation between the Educational Partnerships Team, relevant School, Faculty and the partner.

2.3.13 In instances where it is determined that the partnership is no longer performing in line with its original aims, where transfer rates have continuously dropped below the set threshold within the legal agreement, or student performance and achievement on the Keele programme transferred into is consistently lower than other students studying on the Keele programme, the Educational Partnerships Team, in consultation with the relevant School and Faculty (and Global Student Recruitment and Access Team for Articulation partnerships aligned to the University's key strategic recruitment markets), will determine whether the legal agreement should be renewed, and a proposal to discontinue the partnership will be submitted to SRAG for approval. Subject to approval from SRAG, the Educational Partnerships Team will communicate the decision with the partner.

2.3.14 Should it be decided by the Educational Partnerships Team, in consultation with the relevant School and Faculty (and Global Student Recruitment and Access Team for Articulation partnerships aligned to the University's key strategic recruitment markets), that the partnership should continue and the legal agreement be renewed, but further action is required to improve the performance of the partnership based on the obligations and expectations set out in the legal agreement, for example with regards to transfer rates to the University or student performance and achievement on the Keele programme students have transferred into, the Educational Partnerships Team, in consultation with the relevant School and Faculty (and Global Student Recruitment and Access Team for Articulation partnerships aligned to the University's key strategic recruitment markets), should discuss corrective measures to address the performance with the partner, which will then be reflected within a revised legal agreement subject to SRAG approval to continue the partnership and revise the existing legal agreement.

e) The Educational Partnerships Register

2.3.15 The University maintains a formal register of all approved and currently active educational partnerships, based on partnership models set out in this Code. The Register holds a range of data on active partnerships including but not limited to, recruitment performance against contractual obligations and expectations set out in Financial Business Cases (where relevant) and contractual term dates. Updates to the Educational Partnerships Register are submitted regularly to SRAG and EPC and other University committees as required for consideration.

f) External Examiners

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

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

2.3.18 External examiners are expected to write an annual report, which the University's Quality Assurance Team will disseminate 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/Programme Directors are encouraged to discuss external examiner findings with partners and where indicated in a report, determine where enhancements can be made. Students will be able to access external examiner reports through the 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, which may also be discussed at Student Staff Voice Committee meetings (or equivalent).

g) Periodic Partner and Partnership Review

2.3.19 For partnerships modelled on a Franchise, Validation, Joint/Dual Award and Co-Delivery arrangement at an undergraduate and postgraduate taught level and those partnerships of

significant institutional scale, a Periodic Partner and Partnership Review is required on a periodic basis, normally aligned with the expiration of the legal agreement. At the start of each academic year, the Educational Partnerships Team will establish whether an existing agreement is due to expire in the proceeding calendar year ahead and consult with the relevant Faculty and School to establish whether a partnership should be renewed and on what terms the renewal should proceed. Further consultation may be required through SRAG and EPC.

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

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

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

Periodic Review Requirements (indicative)

Type of Arrangement	Recommended Periodic Review Process
Co-Delivery of Keele Award	Full Periodic Partner and Partnership Review with SRAG Approval to Renew/Continue
Dual Award (<i>Inc Dual PhD</i>)	Full Periodic Partner and Partnership Review with SRAG/UEC (for Dual PhD) Approval to Renew/Continue
Franchise	Full Periodic Partner and Partnership Review with SRAG Approval to Renew/Continue
Joint Award (<i>Inc Joint PhD</i>)	Full Periodic Partner and Partnership Review with SRAG/UEC (for Joint PhD) Approval to Renew/Continue
Validation	Full Periodic Partner and Partnership Review with SRAG Approval to Renew/Continue
Offsite Delivery/ Flying Faculty	Full Periodic Partner and Partnership Review with SRAG Approval to Renew/Continue
Split Site PhDs	Faculty PGR Committee and University Doctoral Academy

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

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

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

h) Expanding Provision

2.3.25 In some cases a Faculty may wish to expand the portfolio of programmes with an existing educational partner, with the aim of introducing new provision, either within the same subject area or within an entirely different one, and/or extend or amend the nature of the partnership to a new model of collaboration. Expansion of an existing educational partnership may be led by the Faculty currently in partnership or by another Faculty entirely.

2.3.26 In the event that a Faculty wishes to expand an existing educational partnership, dependant on the nature of the expansion, a single stage approval process will normally be undertaken via SRAG, unless risks determined through the risk assessment are unmitigated, or remain high regardless of the mitigation in place, in which case UEC will normally make the final decision on the approval of a proposed partnership expansion. The Educational Partnerships Team will determine

the correct approval route for an expansion proposal, based on the scale and associated risk of the provision being expanded. Faculties should consult with the Educational Partnerships Team, who will advise on the expansion proposal and the appropriate approval route of the expansion, as well as additional requirements for approval, such as due diligence and risk assessment on the partner and partnership, a Financial Business Case, and a possible partner approval visit. Where further University consultation is required on an expansion proposal, the Educational Partnerships Team will work with the Faculty to coordinate the necessary consultation to inform the expansion proposal.

2.3.27 Once the Educational Partnerships Team have advised on the approval route and the viability of the proposal, a [Partnership Expansion Proposal Form](#) should be completed by the proposing Faculty. At the same time, where required, the Faculty will complete a Financial Business Case for the expanded provision, and, where required, the Educational Partnerships Team will liaise with the partner to coordinate due diligence and the risk assessment, and potentially, preparations for a partnership approval visit. Once complete, the Partnership Expansion Proposal Form (and where required, a Financial Business Case and/or due diligence and risk assessment) should be submitted to the Educational Partnerships Team, which will collate the necessary documentation for submission to SRAG (or in some cases, UEC), including findings from the due diligence, risk assessment and partner approval visit (where required).

2.3.28 The Partnership Expansion Proposal Form (and associated documentation, where required) will be submitted by the Educational Partnerships Team to SRAG (or in some cases, UEC) where the proposal will be presented by the relevant Faculty Executive Dean and Pro Vice-Chancellor International. Following approval of a partnership expansion proposal, the Educational Partnerships Team will work with the Project Assurance Team and/or the Director of Legal, Governance and Compliance/an external legal organisation to amend the existing legal agreement, or where necessary, draft a new legal agreement, with further implementation work undertaken in accordance with Section 2.2 of this Code dependant on the model of partnership for which the expansion was approved. It is important that any expansion proposal takes into consideration in-country approval and a suitable time frame for implementation, based on the model of collaboration.

i) Risk Management and Oversight

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

j) Cause for Concern

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

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

2.3.32 The exact nature of the cause for concern may be such that an inspection visit to the partner institution by the University 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.

k) Termination and Withdrawal

2.3.33 Either partner may initiate the termination of a partnership, or where relevant, a programme delivered through a partnership, subject to the termination clauses set out in the legal agreement. This may be triggered by changes in the regulatory environment in which the partnership must operate, in the levels of demand for the provision, 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 SRAG (or in some cases, UEC).

2.3.34 Upon termination of the legal agreement, and dependant on the terms of the agreement, the partner/s and University will cease their obligations as set out in the legal agreement. For educational partnerships where programmes are delivered at/by the partner, the partner/s will cease to operate the programme/s except in respect of students already enrolled prior to the date the termination of the agreement comes into effect. Any decision to terminate an agreement must therefore be subject to satisfactory arrangements being made for existing students to complete their programme and be assessed for the award for which they registered. Such teach-out arrangements will be determined by agreement between the University and the partner and will require approval from the relevant FEC and EPC using the [Teach Out Proposal Form](#) before being recorded as a formal variation to the legal agreement. Teach out provisions must also be conducted

in accordance with the University's [Student Protection Plan](#). The following matters need to be considered and agreed prior to a legal agreement being terminated:

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

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

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

a) Educational Partnerships Team

3.1 The Educational Partnerships Team is responsible for overseeing the management of Collaborative Provision-based and strategic institutional educational partnerships from their inception through to their approval (institutional and external), implementation and ongoing operation, reporting regularly to the Student Recruitment and Admissions Group (SRAG) as required and Educational Partnerships Committee (EPC) on the University's active and developing educational partnerships through associated performance data.

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

3.3 The Educational Partnerships Team provides initial advice on the viability of new partnership proposals before supporting their submission through the relevant University procedures for approval, engaging with a range of stakeholders to ensure that robust viability assessments are carried out prior to any substantial resource dedicated to a proposal and a request for University approval being made. Following University approval of a new partnership, the Educational Partnerships Team will coordinate the procedures for and input into the contract development and negotiation process, working with the relevant Keele and partner stakeholders and prepare the necessary documentation for external in-country approval.

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

3.5 Once approved and implemented, the Educational Partnerships Team maintains responsibility for the ongoing oversight of a partnership alongside Faculties and Schools, supporting partnership monitoring and evaluation processes as set out in this Code of Practice and the governance arrangements implemented for the partnership (where applicable), reporting into the relevant central University Committees. The Educational Partnerships Team also acts as a central point of contact for any enquiries related to the partnership which could not immediately be dealt with by the named contacts within the partnership's operational framework.

3.6 Working alongside Heads of Faculty Operations, Global Student Recruitment and Admissions and other relevant colleagues within the University, the Educational Partnerships Team provides regular assessments on a partnership's performance against set criteria and utilising extensive data sets generated by the University's Data Analytics Team and Corporate Information Services, to ensure the ongoing viability of a partnership against its original Financial Business Case, and that student performance metrics continue to meet University expectations and those regulated through the Office for Students.

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

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

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

b) Global Student Recruitment and Admissions

3.10 Global Student Recruitment and Admissions maintains the knowledge, expertise and access across the University's identified strategic global markets and will endeavour to provide initial advice and market insight to those seeking to develop a new partnership proposal where aligned to the University's strategic markets.

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

3.12 Global Student Recruitment and Admissions, in particular, the Global Student Recruitment and Access Team, act as a main stakeholder for determining whether an Articulation partnership aligned to the University's key strategic recruitment markets can be resourced appropriately and should be entered into, particularly where the partnership is to be entered into purely on the basis of increasing on-campus recruitment. In addition, the Global Student Recruitment and Access Team will oversee the exploration, approval, implementation and ongoing management of recruitment-based partnerships, such as Progression arrangements.

c) Keele Doctoral Academy

3.13 The Keele Doctoral Academy (KDA) provides an overarching support system for all matters relating to postgraduate research students, including oversight and coordination of academic governance, policies and regulations, and research training. Part of the KDA's mission is to enhance the experience of research students and staff by providing opportunities to connect with the wider population. The KDA provides advice and guidance on the development of new PGR partnerships and, working alongside the Educational Partnerships Team, coordinates the approval, implementation and ongoing management and monitoring of PGR partnerships, including those set out in the PGR Partnerships Framework attached as an appendix to this Code (**Appendix 1**).

d) Quality Assurance Team

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

e) Student Records and Examinations Team

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

- implementation of programme operations via the University's Student Record Management System;
- creation of programme structure on the University's Student Record Management System;
- creating and maintaining the student record, Keele card production and distribution, validation of a student's record, maintenance of student records and any status changes, calculation of a student's progression/award, keeping and circulating agendas and minutes of Boards of Examiners, releasing and communicating results outcomes to students and staff, producing degree certificates, transcripts and the student HEAR (where applicable).

f) Project Assurance Team and Legal, Governance and Compliance

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

g) Information and Digital Services

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

h) Keele Faculties

3.18 Keele Faculties will maintain responsibility for partnerships located within their Faculty, with the Executive Dean maintaining responsibility for the approval of a new partnership proposal to proceed to SRAG (or in some cases UEC) or, in the case of Split Site PhD partnerships, the University Doctoral Academy Committee (UDAC) for institutional 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 education and research. Keele Faculties will also have ultimate responsibility for developing Financial Business Cases where required, usually through the Head of Faculty Operations. In most cases, in relation to partnerships at undergraduate and

postgraduate level, the Dean of Internationalisation and Partnerships will undertake a key role in leading on new partnership proposals aligned to the Faculty, and actively engage in the ongoing management and monitoring of partnership arrangements once established, alongside Deans of Education and Heads of School.

i) Keele Schools⁶

3.19 Keele Schools will usually lead on the development of a new partnership proposal. Schools will work with the Faculty's Dean of Internationalisation and Partnerships and the Educational Partnerships Team during the development, approval and implementation of a new partnership and other central Professional Services teams across the University on an ongoing basis once the partnership is established. In most cases, particularly in relation to partnerships at undergraduate and postgraduate level, the School's 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 educational partnerships, Schools will:

For partnerships at undergraduate and postgraduate level:

- Approach the Educational Partnerships Team for initial advice on potential proposals to establish an educational partnership;
- Establish connections with the proposed partner institution/organisation and introduce such connections as necessary to members of the University's Senior Management Team, including those within the Faculty, including the Executive Dean and Dean of Internationalisation and Partnerships, as well as relevant central Professional Services teams, including the Educational Partnerships Team;
- Undertake the relevant approval process in consultation with the Educational Partnerships Team and with authorisation from the Head of School, Head of Faculty Operations and Faculty Executive Dean, who will be responsible for presenting to SRAG (or in some cases UEC) new partnership proposals where SRAG (or UEC) approval is required;
- Work with the Head of Faculty Operations to establish a Financial Business Case (where applicable);
- Develop the programme content (where applicable) in accordance with this Code of Practice and the University's regulatory framework, including the procedures for programme approval and modification;
- Establish and resource a member of staff to undertake Link Tutor/Programme Director responsibilities;
- Work with the Educational Partnerships Team and other central Professional Services to develop the operational framework (where applicable) for the partnership once approved and prepare for implementation;

⁶ Further information on the responsibilities and key role of Faculties and Schools in educational partnerships, including details of the Link Tutor/Programme Director role can be found in the [Educational Partnerships - Roles and Responsibilities of Faculties and Schools](#) guidance.

- Coordinate the approval of teaching staff at the partner (where applicable) and facilitate dialogue between teaching teams;
- Manage the day-to-day operations of the partnership in relation to programme delivery and operations;
- Contribute to annual monitoring of the partnership arrangement in accordance with this Code of Practice.

For PGR partnerships:

- Approach the Educational Partnerships Team and KDA 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, Dean of Internationalisation and Partnerships, KDA and other central Professional Services as necessary;
- Undertake the relevant approval process in consultation with the Educational Partnerships Team and KDA with authorisation from the Head of School, Head of Faculty Operations, Faculty Executive Dean, Dean of Research and Dean of Internationalisation and Partnerships;
- Work with the Head of Faculty Operations to establish a Financial Business Case (where applicable);
- Establish with the KDA an appropriate regulatory framework for the students under the partnership, aligned to the provisions set out in the legal agreement, and ensure these are communicated effectively through the University's offer letter to students;
- Manage the day-to-day operations of the partnership with relation to a student's research;
- Contribute to annual monitoring of the arrangement as required.

j) Keele Students' Union and Keele Postgraduate Association

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

k) Keele Language Centre

3.21 The Keele Language Centre carries out a pivotal role informing and contributing to English Language and cultural educational skills across educational partnerships. The Language Centre also assesses the language abilities of students studying through an educational partnership and determines specific, targeted support. The Keele Language Centre works with staff at the University and partner to maintain academic quality and standards in English language delivery and ensure students are equipped to succeed on a Keele programme.

I) Other Professional Services

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

4. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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

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

- Appendix 1 PGR Partnerships Framework

5. REVIEW, APPROVAL & PUBLICATION

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

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

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

6. ANNEXES

- Appendix 1 PGR Partnerships Framework

7. DOCUMENT CONTROL INFORMATION

Document Name	Educational Partnerships Code of Practice
Owner	David Hazelgrove, Head of Educational Partnerships, Academic Registry
Version Number	6.0
Equality Analysis Form Submission Date	05/01/2023
Approval Date	24/04/2023
Approved By	University Executive Committee
Date of Commencement	April 2023
Date of Last Review	April 2023
Date for Next Review	April 2026
Related University Policy Documents	Regulation C1, Regulation C9, Regulation C10, Regulation D, Regulation D2, Regulation D3, Regulation E1, Postgraduate Research Code of Practice, Marking and Moderation Policy, Generic Marking Criteria, Learning Principles, Climate Action Framework Principles

<i>For Office Use – Keywords for search function</i>	
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Appendix 1 PGR Partnerships Framework

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

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