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Learning and Teaching Committee

Subject: Revisions to Section 12 of the Academic Quality Procedures Handbook (AQPH): Validation and External Collaboration

Origin: Rob Pearson, Programme Quality and Teaching Partnerships

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**Introduction**

Learning and Teaching Committee is asked to approve recommendations from the Teaching Partnerships Sub-Committee (TPSC) to revise section 12 of the Academic Quality Procedures Handbook.

The changes are mainly presentational, collating guidance that is currently presented over 3 different documents, re-ordering and cutting out duplication (current web pages are at <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/ar/policy/aqp/12/index.htm> ). The changes are tracked in Appendix 1.

However, there are some more fundamental changes:

1. Renaming the section “Collaborative Provision”
2. Removing the protocol on ‘Associate College Status’ (see Appendix 2, section 3).

The protocol dates back to November 1998 (see Appendix 3). The external environment has moved on since then and our sole FE link is now with Loughborough College. Therefore it is suggested that we no longer need such a framework with which to work with FE colleges.

1. Revising the definition of collaborative provision (see Appendix 1, section 1.1)
2. Revising the policy on Foundation Degrees (see Appendix 1, section 1.8)
3. Replacing two parallel routes for approval (a route for validations and a route for ‘other’ forms of collaborations, with a single approval route: see Appendix 1).

**APPENDIX 1**

**Proposed Section 12: Collaborative Provision**

The existing web pages (see <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/ar/policy/aqp/12/index.htm>) have been collated and tracked changes made).

**.1 Policy on Collaborative Provision**

1. Collaborative provision is defined as educational provision leading to a Loughborough University qualification, or to specific credit toward a qualification, that is delivered and/or supported and/or assessed through an arrangement with a partner organisation.
2. Loughborough University currently engages in two types of collaborative agreement:

* Validation, whereby provision is developed and delivered by the partner institution and leads to a Loughborough University qualification and/or Loughborough University credits.
* Joint Delivery, whereby provision is developed and delivered jointly by Loughborough University and by the partner institution and leads to a Loughborough University qualification and/or Loughborough University credits. Students may or may not be registered with, and/or receive a qualification from, the partner institution as well as from Loughborough University.

1. The University does not engage in franchise agreements, where an existing Loughborough University programme is delivered entirely by the partner institution, leading to a Loughborough University qualification.
2. Collaborative provision will be considered only if it contributes to the achievement of the University's strategic objectives and can be achieved without detriment to the University's excellent reputation for learning and teaching.
3. More specifically, proposals for collaborative programmes must meet one or more of the following criteria:

(a)   The programme is intended to contribute to widening participation in UK higher education.

(b)   The programme contributes to the development of academic links with the partner organisation which will enhance the University's reputation for high quality teaching and research.

(c)   The programme strengthens an existing successful partnership.

It follows that our objective will be to concentrate on creating and nurturing a limited number of strong, rich institutional relationships.

1. The University will normally consider collaborative programmes only in disciplines in which it has subject expertise and the active and willing engagement of a University School in a cognate subject area is a normal prerequisite.  However, in the case of programmes meeting criterion 4(c) above, provision in other disciplines may be considered as long as appropriate subject expertise can be built into the partnership arrangements.
2. It is expected that staff in a partner institution teaching on a validated programme will be engaged in scholarship and up-to-date with developments in their subject.
3. With the exception of Loughborough College, the University will not validate Foundation Degrees at Further Education Colleges.

**.2 Procedures for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative Provision**

#### Introduction

1. The University is accountable for the quality and standards of all programmes and awards offered or made in its name which are provided under collaborative arrangements.  The arrangements for assuring the standards of awards and qualifications and the quality of what is offered to students through collaborative provision must be as rigorous, secure and open to scrutiny as those for programmes provided wholly within the responsibility of the University.

#### Approval Stage 1: Outline proposal

1. Any proposal to enter into collaborative arrangements with another organisation will initially be discussed by the Operations Committee (OPS).
2. OPS require an outline proposal to be provided at the outset normally by the University School sponsoring the proposal.
3. The outline proposal should  provide sufficient information for the senior officers to assess the overall standing of the partner organisation as well as the nature of the particular collaborative provision proposed and any matters of principle it might raise. It should give an indication of the resources that the partner organisation will make available to support the collaboration and explain the aims and objectives of the proposed collaboration and its compatibility with the University's strategic plans. It should also explain how the collaboration will fit into relevant School development plans, and indicate how the arrangements will be supported at School level within the University.
4. In the case of a major strategic proposal, OPS may set up a project group to undertake further work on the proposal, arrange for the financial viability of the proposal to be assessed, and/or refer the proposal to Senate for approval in principle, before subsequent steps in the procedures outlined in this document are taken.  Exceptionally, a proposal may trigger the OPS approval procedures for major projects and be handled accordingly.  OPS may recommend that an initial consultationfee be charged to the prospective partner organisation before the University embarks on a detailed consideration of a proposal.
5. If OPS or Senate is not supportive, the sponsoring University School and the prospective partner will be informed at this stage that the proposal will not be taken further.
6. If OPS is of the view that the collaboration should be pursued, and Senate, if requested, has given in-principle approval, the outline proposal, together with any relevant additional information now amassed, will be referred to LTC with a recommendation that the Committee proceed to a more detailed consideration of the issues involved.

#### Approval Stage 2: Detailed scrutiny

1. At this point, the Teaching Partnerships Sub-Committee (TPSC) will, on behalf of LTC, scrutinise both the proposed partnership and the proposed programme(s) / credit(s) (the latter on behalf of Curriculum Sub-Committee).
2. TPSC will first review the outline proposal and any additional information provided in order to assure itself that any matters of principle or issues that might give cause for concern can be handled satisfactorily, and may if necessary consult further with OPS.
3. TPSC will then establish a Partnership Approval Panel to consider the proposal in more detail and may in the light of its discussions and any further consultations give guidance to the Panel on handling particular aspects of the proposal.
4. The Partnership Approval Panel will be constituted as follows:

* Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching) (Chair)
* Relevant Deans or their nominees
* A member of Senate appointed by the Vice-Chancellor
* A member ofCSC appointed by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching) *or alternatively* a second member of LTC or Senate appointed by the Vice-Chancellor
* Head of Programme Quality and Teaching Partnerships
* One member of Loughborough Students’ Union executive

1. Initially the Partnership Approval Panel will require from the organisation seeking validation a detailed submission covering institutional and programme-specific issues as listed below.  Having received and considered the detailed submission, the Validation Panel will visit the organisation seeking validation.  The visit will involve meetings with staff and students (if appropriate) in order to satisfy the panel that the organisation is an able and appropriate partner. The Chair of the Partnership Approval Panel will arrange for appropriate subject specialists, either from within or where necessary from outside the University, to advise the Panel and participate as appropriate in its deliberations.

Institutional information required:

* Information in regard to any previous validation / partnership procedures
* The date from which the partnership will operate
* Title, level and duration of programmes to be approvedEntry requirements and standards
* Arrangements for credit accumulation and transfer
* Assessment and examination procedures and standards, including sight of any external assessors' reports
* Regulatory framework for HE programmes in the institution
* Quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms in the organisation
* External reports on the quality of provision in the organisation
* Financial viability of the organisation, including audited accounts for the previous five years
* Funding arrangements and tuition fees for the programmes to be approved
* Management and governance structures
* Strategic plan
* Learning and teaching strategy
* Human resources strategy and staff development arrangements
* Health and safety arrangements
* Data protection practice
* Student complaints procedures
* Equal opportunities policies
* In the case of international partnerships, any specific legal, regulatory, professional or cultural issues relating to HE in the country concerned

1. Information required for each programme proposed for approval:

* Programme specification (normally using Loughborough University ’s template), including programme aims, intended learning outcomes, structure and requirements
* Full module specifications, including in each case aims, intended learning outcomes, contents, modular weighting, level, methods of teaching and learning, methods of feedback, methods of assessment
* A reading list for each module
* Programme regulations
* Staffing for the programme, including balance between full-time and part-time staff
* Curricula vitae of teaching staff
* A statement nominating one specific member of staff as Programme Director
* Student intake and sources of recruitment
* Competition from other organisations
* Employment prospects of graduates
* Availability of space and equipment including lecture room and laboratory facilities, computing support, use of e-learning
* Library facilities
* Availability of administrative, technical and other support staff
* Views of external examiners, assessors, professional/industrial bodies etc

1. Following the visit, the Partnership Approval Panel will report and make recommendations to LTC on both the proposed partnership and the proposed programme(s) / credits.
2. LTC, having considered the advice of the Partnership Approval Panel, will determine whether or not to recommend to Senate that approval proceed.  Senate will in turn receive a report from LTC and, if agreed, give final approval to the partnership.
3. The University will charge a fee to the partner organisation for the work of the Partnership Approval Panel in the light of the actual costs of the exercise.  LTC will advise Finance Committee in respect to the fee to be charged.  It will also report on any other resource implications for the University.

**Written agreement**

31. Once a proposal for collaborative provision has been approved, a formal agreement will be drawn up, to be signed by the Vice-Chancellor and the Head of the partner organisation (or their nominees).

32. The agreement will include a clear and explicit statement of the respective responsibilities of the University and the partner organisation, including their responsibilities for all matters listed under paragraph 29 above.

33. The agreement will include provision for termination and arbitration and cover the residual obligations to students on termination of the agreement.

34. The financial arrangements will be contained in the agreement or in an accompanying Financial Memorandum. In the case of validation, these will include the fees to be charged to the partner organisation for validation, normally on a per capita basis, which will be reviewed annually in advance of the academic session to which they relate.

35. Copies of the agreement will be lodged with the Secretary to TPSC.

Responsibility of the School

1. Once Senate approves a recommendation to proceed, it will assign responsibility for each approved programme to a cognate academic School to support the programme approval arrangements on an ongoing basis.
2. The School will be expected to nominate a member of academic staff to act as link-person with the programme team in the partner organisation.
3. The School is expected, primarily through the nominated the link-person, to assume responsibility for providing, at minimum, the following support:

* Liaison over the appointment of external examiner(s) for the programme: normally extending the remit of one or more of the department’s existing externals
* Attendance at programme boards in the partner organisation
* Advising staff in the partner organisation about academic standards including the marking of student work: this might entail sampling the marking of a range of work at different levels of the programme
* Invitations to the staff in the partner organisation to observe practice in the department by attending meetings/events
* Helping to identify staff development needs
* Offering advice on programme design and content, and on methods of teaching, learning and assessment. The link person should take care not to assume the approval role of the AD(T) in respect of programme changes.
* Inputting to APR/PPR processes
* Offering comment on information provided for students

#### Monitoring and review

1. The provision will be subject to regular evaluation of the programme/modules concerned and monitoring of the associated quality assurance arrangements.   This will normally be undertaken through the University's standard annual and periodic review procedures, unless indicated otherwise in the Quality Assurance Statement and/or the formal agreement.
2. The annual review procedures will require the partner organisation itself, through an appropriate internal body, to review the provision being validated, to involve the Associate Dean (Teaching) of the School in a summative meeting of the review body, and to report through the AD(T) to TPSC.  Periodic programme review, normally scheduled on a five-year cycle, is undertaken by an independent panel, appointed by the University and including an external assessor, which will visit the partner organisation and hold discussions with key programme staff and representatives of the students.
3. TPSC may request that an annual or periodic programme review should encompass specific matters additional to those normally required by LTC.

#### Changes in provision

1. All changes to existing collaborative provision, including proposals to change programme or module specifications, or programme regulations, or to introduce new modules, will be required to be submitted for approval through the appropriateSchool in a form analogous to that required for changes to other University programmes.  Proposals will be processed through the University's standard approval mechanisms.
2. Any proposal to introduce a new programme of study in collaboration with an existing partner should be submitted for approval through the stages set out under paragraphs xxx above.  The same applies where a partner organisation in a validation agreement wishes to propose further programmes for validation by the University.An outline proposal will be required in each case.  This will be processed in the same way as an outline proposal for a new collaboration, as described in Stage paragraphs xx above, and, save for information on the nature of the organisation, should provide the same information as set out in paragraph x.
3. In the case of a new programme proposal, once OPS or Senate has given in-principle approval for the proposal to go ahead, TPSC may at its discretion determine whether to allow the proposal to be processed through the University's standard approval mechanisms (ie through Curriculum Sub-Committee) or to establish a Partnership Approval Panel to consider it.  A Partnership Approval Panel will normally be established if the proposed programme is in a different subject area from programmes previously validated by the University at the partner organisation.  Such a Partnership Approval Panel will be constituted and proceed in accordance with paragraphs XXX above, reporting to LTC.  The Panel will be concerned mainly with issues specific to the new programme but can be expected to seek an update on institutional issues since the last approval visit.
4. The formal agreement will be amended to incorporate any additional collaborative provision with the same partner organisation following approval by Senate.

#### Renewal of agreements

1. Collaborative agreements will normally be subject to review and renewal on a five-year cycle.

1. The nature of the review to be undertaken prior to renewal will normally be indicated in the formal agreement.
2. Before any partnership agreement is renewed, the TPSC will carry out a full institutional and programme review, covering the issues listed under paragraphs x and x above.  This will be undertaken by a Partnership Review Panel with the same constitution as the Panel referred to in paragraph x.  The Partnership Review Panel will also receive reports of annual and periodic programme reviews undertaken during the period of the existing validation agreement and may, in the light of any recent periodic programme review, reduce its requirements in respect of programme specific information.
3. The Partnership Review Panel will report to LTC, which will in turn report and make recommendations to Senate..
4. The University will charge a fee to the partner organisation for the parternsip review.  The Partnership Review Panel will make a recommendation concerning the fee to be charged in its report to LTC in the light of the actual costs of the exercise.

#### Variation of procedures

1. The PVC(T) as Chair of LTC shall have the right to vary any of the procedures outlined above should circumstances demand this.  Such variations will be reported to the next meeting of Senate, and in exceptional circumstances may require the approval of the Vice-Chancellor as Chair of Senate.

October 2011

**APPENDIX 2**

**Section 12 of the AQPH: Validation and External Collaboration**

Available online @ <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/ar/policy/aqp/12/index.htm>

## .1 Policy on Collaborative Programmes

The University's Policy on Collaborative Programmes is presented in [Appendix 22](http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/ar/policy/aqp/appendix/22/index.htm).

## .2 Procedures for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative Provision

The procedures, which relate to collaborative arrangements between the University and other organisations for the provision of programmes or modules of study leading to awards, or to specific credit towards awards, of the University, are presented in [Appendix 23.](http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/ar/lps/collaborative/approval_monitoring_reviewofprovision(Dec09).html)

## .3 Associate College Status

The University has a framework within which agreements can be developed with individual colleges if and when it becomes desirable to do so.

The following criteria have been agreed for the University to recognise an independent organisation as an Associate College of the University.

* the Associate College must be a high-quality provider of further and/or higher education.
* there must be a sound strategic reason for the University to recognise a college as having Associate College status.
* there should be clear benefits to the University, in terms of student recruitment, income generation, new programme developments, marketing and promotion, etc.
* there must be a formal agreement (approved by Council and the college Governing Body) which specifies the objectives and benefits of the association, and defines its parameters.

**APPENDIX 3**

# Teaching and Learning Committee

### TLC98-P52

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### Subject: The status and title of Associate College of Loughborough University

### Origin: TLC Steering Group

A recent meeting of the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Group considered the issue of awarding the title of ‘Associate College of Loughborough University’ to appropriate institutions which work primarily in the FE sector. The principle was broadly endorsed by VAG and the following proposals are now recommended by the TLC Steering Group.

1. **Background**

Many universities now have Associate Colleges with which they have a public and permanent relationship. These include a *de facto* FE arm (e.g. Derby/High Peak), feeder colleges/providing progression routes (Warwick/a number of colleges in Warwickshire and West Midlands), and colleges seeking university status (Leicester/Nene).

Loughborough currently has no such agreements, but the clear desire of both HEFCE and FEFC to see greater collaboration between the sectors, and the explicit political steer towards a post-16 continuum, suggests that we should at least have a framework within which we could develop agreements with individual colleges, if and when it becomes desirable to do so.

1. **Principles**

If the University was to recognise an independent organisation as an Associate College of Loughborough University it would need to meet certain criteria. The following criteria are proposed:

* the Associate College must be a high-quality provider of further and/or higher education
* there must be a sound strategic reason for the University to recognise a college as having Associate College status
* there should be clear benefits to the University, in terms of student recruitment, income generation, new programme developments, marketing and promotion, etc.
* there must be a formal agreement (approved by Council and the college Governing Body) which specifies the objectives and benefits of the association, and defines its parameters.