

**Collaborative Partnerships**

**Institutional approval: Preliminary enquiries**

This form is to be used by Institutes/Departments to seek agreement from the University Executive (UE) to commence the formal institutional approval process for a new partnership relating to academic (taught and/or research) activity. It provides a summary of the proposed collaboration and its rationale, and the outcome of initial enquiries and discussions about the suitability of the proposed partner.

At the commencement of preliminary enquiries, the Director of Regional Engagement and the Head of Collaborative Programmes should be informed and, where pertinent, involved in any initial discussions and risk assessment.

**Completing the form**

The form should be completed and submitted at an early stage, normally *at least* 12 months before a new partnership might commence.

It is expected that the form will be completed by the Institute with reference to information available in the public domain, eg via the internet, and from initial discussions with potential partners. These initial discussions should make clear to the proposed partner, as appropriate, that there is a formal process of [partnership approval](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/aqu/719.htm) involving detailed due diligence that commences after UE has given assent to proceed; a summary of this process in flow chart form is available on the AQU webpages. Depending on the nature of the proposed collaboration and/or the status of the proposed partner this may or may not involve a formal visit, scrutiny of financial status and other documentation; this is decided by the Director of Regional Engagement and Director of Quality and Educational Development following UE approval to proceed. Please note that the University procedures for collaborative provision are currently under review (April 2012).

Depending on the nature of the proposed collaboration, the preliminary enquiries will vary, and it is expected this is taken into account in completing the form. The information relevant where a full programme is being delivered by the proposed partner, will be different from that required where the University is delivering the programme but the learning is off-site.

Staff responsible for initial discussions with a proposed partner should be aware of the content of this form. It is advisable to check websites and other information in the public domain in advance of initial discussions, including:

* website of proposed partner
* websites of relevant national or international organisations (eg QAA, Ofsted, PSRBs, NARIC, British Council, relevant government agencies in organisation’s own country, etc).

Implicit in completion of the form is a basic risk and financial assessment, and it is expected that initial discussions cover in outline matters such as:

* current financial (and legal) status of the organisation
* potential financial arrangements
* QA processes (of UW that will relate to approval of the partner and also of the proposed partnership)
* current and previous partnerships and the policy of UW in seeking references from such partners
* UW processes for developing and approving the partnership and related collaboration, including ensuring that the proposed partner understands that there are formal processes to be completed before any publicity or marketing of the proposed partnership can take place, and that UW must approve all such materials.

Certain types of collaboration and/or partners will raise specific issues, and Institute staff can seek advice from Director of Regional Engagement in the first instance.

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Date document comes into effect: immediate

Author of the document: Senior Quality Officer/Director of Quality and Educational Development

Date document is due for review: annual



**Collaborative Partnerships**

**Institutional approval: Preliminary Enquiries Form**

**Institute:**

**Author of Form:**

**Name of prospective partner institution/organisation:**

**Contact details of prospective partner institution/organisation:**

**Type of organisation (give brief summary)**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Give brief details of the nature of the organisation/institution and its funding.  [Eg is it an HEI, FEC, private sector organisation, registered company or charity etc; is it for profit/not for profit etc.] |  |
| 2 | Does the organisation have its own degree awarding powers? |  |
| 3 | What experience of HE delivery does the organisation have? [Give indication of extent, level and for how long it has delivered HE, and whether it has experience of UK HE, and if so in what capacity.] |  |

**Potential collaboration (give brief summary)**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| 4 | What is the nature of the proposed collaboration? [Indicate the type of partnership proposed: eg joint award, dual award, franchised, validated, articulation, offsite delivery, learner support etc, and role of proposed partner in the collaboration.] |  |
| 5 | Please give outline details of the proposed academic programme that will be the subject of the collaboration. [Nature and level of the award, discipline, potential number of students, language of students etc.] |  |
| 6 | What contact and discussions have there been to date?  [Who has been involved in discussions on behalf of UW, over what period, visits to potential partner etc.] |  |
| 7 | What are the benefits to the University of entering into the proposed partnership? [Indicate how the proposal fits with University/Institute Strategic Plan and strategy/ policy on collaborative partnerships, and how staff/students will benefit.] |  |

**Initial assessment of proposed partner (provide brief assessment indicating evidence used where appropriate)**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| 8 | What is the size and nature of the organisation?  [Comment on eg number of students/ staff, nature of main business, resources, campus location(s) etc.] |  |
| 9 | How long has the organisation been established? |  |
| 10 | What, if any, is the current academic/educational provision and activity in terms of levels and range (including indication of existing partnerships) of organisation? |  |
| 11 | Do you regard the mission/ objectives/strategy of the organisation to be broadly compatible with UW? [Indicate on what basis this judgement is being made, eg discussions and/or documents seen.] |  |
| 12 | What is the financial status and current standing of the organisation? [This may necessitate direct questions of the proposed partner, including whether the organisation has independently audited accounts, whether in good financial standing etc. NB The partner should be made aware that the University will conduct financial checks before it proceeds with the partnership. This requirement does not apply to UK HEIs and some internationally recognised organisations.] |  |
| 13 | What is your initial assessment of the appropriateness of staff for purposes of proposed collaboration?  [Indicate on what basis this judgement is being made.] |  |
| 14 | What is your initial view of the appropriateness of facilities and learning resources for the proposed collaboration? [Indicate basis on which judgement is being made.] |  |
| 15 | What systems (internal and/or external) are in place to assure the quality of staff and the student experience? [This will normally be ascertained through initial discussions.] |  |
| 16 | What is the public reputation/ standing/record of the organisation in relation to quality? [Refer to any external assessments in public domain where relevant.] |  |

**International recognition and context (for international links only)**

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| 17 | Does the British Council list the organisation as government-recognised? |  |
| 18 | Does NARIC list the organisation and/or relevant awards? [Please specify.] |  |
| 19 | What is the legal standing of the organisation in its own country? [Eg are there legal or regulatory requirements that have implications for the collaborative activity proposed?] |  |

**Forward planning**

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| 20 | Are there any potential issues in taking forward the proposal? [Eg conflicts of interest, timing, financial, PSRB involvement, national endorsement of programme required etc.] |  |
| 21 | To what extent have discussions covered financial arrangements and approval processes? |  |
| 22 | What are the likely costs to the University and what is your initial assessment of the financial viability of the proposed arrangement? |  |
| 23 | What is the proposed commencement date for the partnership and the proposed commencement date for the collaborative activity? [NB discussion should make clear that these are separate processes and partnership approval is without prejudice to the separate process of programme approval.] |  |
| 24 | Is there a memorandum of intent required at this point? [Ie a formally signed agreement to pursue the collaboration.] |  |
| 25 | Are there any significant risks (reputational, financial, quality related) to the University in taking forward this proposal? [Give summary and indicate how these might be managed if appropriate.] |  |

**Other relevant information**

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**Head of Institute/Department:**

**Signed: Date:**

**Head of Regional Engagement:**

**Signed: Date:**