Guidance for Renewal of Taught Collaborative Partnerships

UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

PARTNERSHIP REVIEW AND RENEWAL

"WE WILL BUILD AND INVEST IN STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS WITH WORLD-LEADING UNIVERSITIES BASED ON OUR KEY STRENGTHS AND ASSETS, TO DELIVER IMPACTFUL RESEARCH WORLD-WIDE."

"WE WILL DEVELOP GLOBAL ASPIRATION BY SCHOOL/INSTITUTE AND SUPPORT WITH RELEVANT MECHANISMS/TALENT, ENABLING DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC PARTNERSHIPS WHICH ARE CONSISTENT WITH OUR ASPIRATIONS".

STRATEGY 2031

1. **Purpose**

    1.1. The main purpose of the review process is to assess the continued suitability of the partnership and the programmes delivered under the arrangement. A Review Panel is tasked with determining whether the partnership remains in alignment with the strategic aims of the University of Liverpool, and continues to be of benefit. The Review should be an in-depth evaluation of the partner organisation's on-going ability to manage the academic standards and quality of provision leading to a University of Liverpool award.

    1.2. The Panel will review the relationship between the University of Liverpool and the partner with regards to operational and quality assurance matters making specific reference to external quality assurance requirements and to University of Liverpool policies and procedures.

    1.3. The Review may also provide the opportunity for the panel to appraise the academic provision to enable revalidation of the academic programmes and, where relevant, the completion and submission of any returns to Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies.

    1.4. The University of Liverpool, through its own monitoring, review and enhancement processes, and regular scrutiny of those at its collaborative partnership organisations, is committed to providing an equitable student experience for all students, regardless of the location or mode of delivery.

2. **Rationale for Renewal and Faculty Level Endorsement**

    2.1 The Academic Lead/Link Tutor for the partnership must first complete an application for consideration of its renewal, outlining the rationale for continuing the relationship, evaluating the success of the arrangement and indicating if there are any resource implications.

    2.2 The application requires the endorsement of the relevant Faculty Executive Pro-Vice-Chancellor, in order to confirm that the partnership arrangement continues to be supported by the Faculty. For cross-faculty arrangements, the EPVC for each faculty involved should confirm endorsement. Strategic Partnerships should be endorsed by the University's Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education).

2.3 If any significant issues or major changes since the last Institutional Review are identified, these will be highlighted by AQSD and reported to the Due Diligence Panel (DDP) for consideration, prior to any review activity taking place. The role of the DDP is to either endorse the commencement of renewal activity, request further information or, in rare cases where it is determined that the student experience, the awards made in the University's name, or the University's reputation is at risk, it may reject instigating any review and recommend the partnership is not renewed. In this instance, a report would be compiled and submitted to the Executive Board for approval. An Exit Strategy will be negotiated to ensure fulfilment of UoL's obligations to the students.

3. Mechanisms for Review

3.1 The approach to the review and renewal of a collaborative arrangement is dependent on the level of risk and the maturity of the partnership. Partnerships that are relatively new, or are perceived to be of high risk, will require an Institutional Visit. Well-established or low risk arrangements can be assessed via a Desk-Based review. Both mechanisms involve a Panel, which may comprise senior UoL academic and professional services staff, student representation and External Review. The constitution of Institutional Review Panels will be confirmed by the Director of AQSD ahead of each individual event. The Panel is responsible for evaluating the appropriateness of the partnership and making a recommendation with regards to its renewal on the basis of the evidence available.

3.2 The normal mechanism for renewal of the different categories of partnerships is indicated on the Taxonomy of Teaching and Learning Collaborative Provision. Where the Taxonomy states that *either* a visit or desk-based review may be used, a decision on the appropriate method shall be made by the Director of Academic Quality and Standards Division, in consultation with the relevant department/school/faculty and the Due Diligence Panel where required.

4. Membership of Review Panels

4.1. Reviews will be carried out by a panel from the University which may include the following members:

- PVC for Education or appropriate nominee (e.g. EPVC/APVC) (Chair to the Panel);
- The Director of Academic Quality and Standards Division or nominee;
- A senior academic member of staff external to the School(s)/Institutes directly associated with the partner
- A sabbatical officer of the Liverpool Guild of Students
- Academic Quality Support Officer (AQSO) (Secretary to the Panel)
- An External Reviewer*

In addition, the UoL Link Tutor/Academic Lead and Head of Department/Dean of School should be in attendance, to answer any queries from a UoL perspective and to support the partner through the Institutional Review Process.

*Depending on the mechanism for review and the constitution of the Panel, the External Reviewer (a member of academic staff from a UK higher education institute with relevant

subject or discipline expertise) may be asked to submit a written commentary on the documentation provided, using the meeting headings as prompts for their feedback. External Reviewers taking part remotely must be provided with the full Review documentation a minimum of 4 weeks before the date of the event. Their commentary should be provided for circulation to the Panel no later than one working week prior to the event. For Institutional Visits, the External Reviewer may be asked to attend in person. In such cases, all reasonable expenses will be covered by the UoL Lead School/ Institute/ Department for the partnership, in accordance with the standard UoL expenses policy.

External Reviewer fees are usually set at £200 per half day event, or per written commentary. External Reviewer fees should be paid by the appropriate School/Department via their usual internal process.

4.2 In addition, other appropriate University of Liverpool staff may be in attendance, either in person or by video conferencing/Skype to advise the Panel on curriculum and professional accreditation matters. The Chair of the Panel has final approval of attendees.

5. Arrangements Prior to Review

5.1. The Academic Quality and Standards Division will be responsible for making the necessary arrangements prior to the Review. This will include:

- Requesting all necessary documentation (see section 6 below) from the partner at least two months before the Review and circulating these to the panel members at least four weeks before the event;
- Circulating a draft agenda and itinerary for the Review to the panel and the partner two to four weeks before the event;
- Where a visit is required, making travel arrangements for the Review Panel, to include flights, taxis, accommodation and travel visas (where necessary);
- Arranging a meeting of the panel at least two weeks before the visit to (external members will be invited to join via Skype):
  o Discuss the documentation received from the partner and agree issues to be further explored;
  o Confirm the roles of each panel member;
  o Confirm the travel arrangements (where relevant);
  o Confirm the agenda/itinerary;
  o Confirm any dietary or individual requirements of panel members;
- Confirming all arrangements with the partner after the meeting of the panel.

6. Required Documentation

6.1. In order to inform the agenda and areas of questioning at the review event, the following documentation should be requested from the partner at least two months in advance. This should be provided in electronic format. AQSD will establish an online repository for submission of the required documentation, usually a Microsoft Teams site. The UoL Link Tutor should support the partner in the completion of the Self Evaluation Document.

- A Self Evaluation Document (SED) completed in collaboration with the UoL Academic Lead (**SED Template - Appendix 3; SED Guidance – Appendix 4).**
- Documentation confirming the strategic plan and mission of the partner;

- Documentation confirming the governance arrangements and organisational structure of the partner;
- Confirmation of the legal status of the partner;
- Confirmation of the financial status of the partner to include published accounts/Annual Report;
- Reports from relevant funding or external quality agencies, including Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) accreditation where applicable;
- Human Resources information to include;

    (i)   a list of staff involved in the partnership and their level of qualification and/or professional experience, and

    (ii)   staff development strategy

- Documentation confirming policies and procedures to include diversity and equality, academic and non-academic regulations, student support, IT and teaching and learning strategies;
- Policies and procedures to assure the quality and standards of academic provision, including student feedback and evaluation;
- Programme documentation relevant to the programmes being considered as part of the partnership to include Programme Specifications, Module Outlines, Annual Monitoring and External Examiner reports;
- Evidence of curriculum mapping, where applicable, to confirm continued alignment of the partner's programme(s) with the corresponding UoL programme learning outcomes and comparability of the academic standards. Curriculum mapping must be endorsed by the relevant Curriculum Board and School Scrutiny Panel;
- Relevant student handbooks;
- Management information such as student recruitment, retention, progression and achievement data;
- Confirmation of any other institutions that the partner is already in partnership with or has been in partnership with over the past five years;
- Previous Agreements with the University of Liverpool.
- External Examiner reports and responses

For **articulation arrangements**, the Link Tutor/Academic Lead for the partnership is responsible for reviewing the curriculum mapping, to confirm continued alignment of the partner's programme(s) with the corresponding UoL programme learning outcomes and comparability of the academic standards. Curriculum mappings must be reviewed by an External Reviewer (this can be the same External Reviewer for the Institutional Review itself) and endorsed by the relevant Curriculum Board and School Scrutiny Panel. Evidence of this must be provided for the Panel.

6.2. If documentation is not submitted via a document sharing platform, it **must** include a list of contents and be submitted either as a single PDF or organised into a coherent file structure.

7. Institutional Visits

7.1. Institutional Visits take place over a specified period of time, usually one to three days, depending on the size and complexity of the partnership.

7.2. The timetable for the visit will be confirmed at a meeting of the Panel at least two weeks before the visit and should be informed by the documentation provided in advance of the visit. The

Chair, Secretary and at least one other member of the Panel should be in attendance at this meeting. At this meeting, specific areas of focus should be assigned to Panel members and any particular lines of inquiry discussed. The Secretary may request further information or clarification from the partner.

7.3. Visits will usually include a **tour of facilities**, for example, library, IT facilities, laboratory or other specialist facilities (as appropriate), teaching spaces, social and recreational facilities and student support facilities.

7.4. The Panel should also meet with a representative sample of current students at the partner organisation, or at UoL for standard articulation arrangements.

7.5. It is important to ensure that adequate refreshment breaks and private panel meetings are built into the timetable.

7.6. The following areas should be covered during the Visit, with Panel Members assigned specific areas on which to focus:

- Curriculum Development and Design
- Learning, Teaching and Assessment
- Quality Assurance and Enhancement
- Staff Development
- Student Experience and Representation

8. Desk-Based Review

8.1. Once documentation is received, the AQSO for the event will collate and circulate this to Panel members for an electronic pre-review stage. This is an initial critical read of the paperwork, to establish any lines of enquiry or issues, request additional evidence where necessary and familiarise themselves with the partnership arrangement. **(Pre-review Feedback Template – Appendix 2)**.

8.2. Feedback from the Panel will be submitted, using a template form, to the AQSO, who will produce a summary of responses. This summary will be shared with the Panel and will also form the basis of an indicative agenda. The AQSO will contact the relevant UoL departments and the partner to request any additional documentation where required and to seek clarification on any urgent matters highlighted by the Panel.

8.3. Where possible, arrange a video-conference with students. If required, for example if there were significant concerns identified during the meetings, or if further clarifications are required, a separate video-conference meeting with senior management at the partner can be arranged at a later date. The following areas should be covered during the Review Event, with Panel Members assigned specific areas on which to focus:

- Facilities and Resources (in lieu of a Tour of Facilities)
- Curriculum Development and Design
- Learning, Teaching and Assessment
- Quality Assurance and Enhancement
- Staff Development
- Student Experience and Representation

8.4 Desk-Based Review meetings may include a Skype/video-conference session with appropriate members of staff, both academic and professional services, from the partner.

9. Possible Outcomes

9.1 The Panel can reach the following conclusions, for recommendation to Senate:

i.   To renew the partnership (with or without recommendations)
ii.   To renew the partnership, subject to conditions
iii. To not renew the partnership, and negotiate teach-out arrangements for students, to enable them to complete their named award.

9.2 The Panel should also highlight any areas of effective practice for **commendation**.

10. Following the Review

10.1   The secretary to the Panel will be responsible for providing a review report. The report should be drafted within one week of the event and circulated first to the Chair for comment, then the rest of the Panel members. Once the report has been approved by Panel members it should be forwarded to the partner for comment on matters of accuracy, before being submitted, along with a recommendation as to whether the partnership should be renewed, for consideration for approval at the next available meeting of Collaborative Provision Committee (CPC).

10.2   The UoL Head of Department and Link Tutor are responsible for the completion of an action plan, based on the template provided (**Appendix 5**), in consultation with the partner. The completed action plan should be forwarded to the Secretary for submission to the next appropriate meeting of CPC.

10.3   If approved by CPC, the recommendation is forwarded to Senate for final approval. The secretary to the Panel will contact the partner to confirm the decision of Senate and AQSD will arrange the drafting of any necessary agreements.

10.4   Any reasonable expenses incurred by members of the Panel as part of an Institutional Visit should be submitted to the secretary of the Panel.

Annex 1

<h2 style="text-align:center">INSTITUTIONAL VISIT AIDE MEMOIRE</h2>

The following issues should be explored as part of the Review and should subsequently be evidenced in the Visit Report presented to CPC:

a. **Tour of facilities/Facilities and Resources Meeting**

- What facilities are available?
- Were all facilities available to tour as part of the visit?
- Are the facilities adequate / appropriate for the requirements of the partnership?
- Are the library facilities adequate /appropriate? Are there sufficient recommended texts and related reading materials?
- Are the IT facilities sufficient?
- Do laboratory facilities meet health and safety requirements? What Health and Safety training do students receive?
- Do facilities meet diversity and equality requirements?
- Are the teaching spaces adequate? Are these spaces suitably equipped?
- Have the facilities changed since any previous visits? Have these changes been communicated to the University?

b. **Meeting with students**
- What are the students' overall impressions of the partner?
- Do students feel adequately supported during their studies – academically and pastorally?
- Do students have access to adequate resources?
- Were students adequately inducted into the partner's provision?
- Are students able to access relevant information – i.e. pre-arrival information, student handbooks etc?
- How does student representation operate?
- Do students have any concerns they wish to raise?
- Do students wish to flag any areas of good practice?
- Do students understand the nature of the relationship between the partner and UoL?

c. **Curriculum Development and Design, Learning, Teaching and Assessment**

- Is the curriculum appropriate in terms of level and coverage of academic material? Has a curriculum match taken place recently?
- What are the entry requirements for entry to the partner programme? What are the arrangements for the selection of students?
- How does the partner ensure the inclusion of recent developments in the subject and maintain the programme(s)'s currency?
- Does the delivery reflect best practice in pedagogy?
- Are staff at the partner organisation qualified to deliver in the English language (where applicable?)

- How is the quality of teaching assessed and enhanced? Does peer review of teaching take place?
- What is the market and recruitment strategy for the partnership? Has this changed since establishing the partnership?
- Is employability embedded into the curriculum? What other opportunities are available to students outside of the classroom?

d. **Quality Assurance and Enhancement**

- Does the partner have formal quality assurance procedures and processes in place and who is responsible for managing and monitoring these?
- Does the partner meet in-country expectations of external quality assurance agencies?
- Does the partner meet the expectations and requirements of external UK quality assurance requirements
- Does the partner comply with the University of Liverpool quality procedures and how is this evidenced?
- How are changes to programmes/processes discussed and approved with the University of Liverpool?
- What are the partner's internal mechanisms for modification and approval of modules and programmes?
- Externality – how are external stakeholders involved in the development, approval and review of programmes?

e. **Staff Development**

- Does the partner have policies relating to staff development, health and safety, equality and diversity etc?
- Staffing issues – are there sufficient appropriately qualified academic and support staff to support the partnership?
- What mechanisms does the partner have for induction and mentoring of new staff? Are staff made fully aware of the nature of the partnership?
- Are academic staff able to take advantage of research opportunities?

f. **Student Experience, Support and Representation**

- How effective are the mechanisms for recruitment, selection, induction and preparation for transfer to UoL?
- Is there an overall strategy relating to complaints, student progress, academic appeals, feedback to students etc.? How are students made aware of the routes available for complaints and appeals?
- What are the pastoral and welfare support mechanisms available to students?
- Is there a careers advice service? Is there adequate support for students with special educational needs?
- What is the induction process for students? Do students have representation on institutional committees
- How are the views of students sought?
- Is there a formal personal tutor system?
- How can the University of Liverpool and the partner ensure an equitable student experience for all students regardless of location?

g. **Meeting with Senior Management (if required)**

- Is the financial arrangement already in place sufficient? Does this require further consideration?

- What is the strategy and mission of the partner and how does this fit with the University of Liverpool's strategic aims?
- Are there any cultural differences which need to be considered in maintaining the partnership?
- Are there any issues relating to equality and diversity to be considered in maintaining the partnership?
- How is the partner helping to achieve the aims of Strategy 2031? How does the partnership remain in line with the expectations of the Strategic Plan?
- Are there any major concerns that have been identified during the course of the review?

Annex 2

REVIEW REPORT TEMPLATE

The following areas should be explored as part of a Desk-Based Review and should subsequently be evidenced in the Review Report presented to CPC:

1. Background

- When and where the event took place;
- The purpose of the Review
- Details of the renewal – i.e. the programmes/subject areas involved and the nature of the partnership
- Rationale for the development or continued involvement in the partnership;
- History/profile/reputation of the partner.

2. Panel
List of panel members involved in the review.

3. Process
Append the agenda for the Review and a list of documentation provided by the partner prior to the review meeting.

4. **Tour of Facilities/Resources**

5. **Meeting with Students**

6. **Curriculum Development and Design, Learning, Teaching and Assessment**

7. Quality Assurance and Enhancement

8. **Staff Development**

9. Student Experience and Representation

10 Meeting with Senior Management (if required)

11. Conclusions and recommendations
- Provide a recommendation to CPC as to whether the partnership should be renewed.
- List any areas where there are concerns regarding the partner
- List any areas of good practice to highlight regarding the partner
- List any issues which require further consideration in renewing the partnership.

Annex 3 - Example Agenda Template – One-Day Institutional Visit

Time	Meeting	Suggested Attendees
0900 – 0930	Introductory Meeting	Partner Academic Lead, and those involved with the delivery of the programme(s) and Senior Management
0930 – 1000	Presentation by Partner/Programme Team	
1000 – 1015	Refreshment Break	
1015 – 1100	Tour of Facilities	Partner Academic Lead and relevant Technical/Support staff
1100 – 1115	Private Panel Meeting	Panel only
1115 – 1215	Meeting with Students	Representative selection of students on the collaborative programme(s)
1215 – 1300	Lunch	Panel and students
1300 – 1345	Curriculum Development and Design, Learning, Teaching and Assessment	Partner Academic Lead and those involved with the delivery of the programme
1345 – 1430	Quality Assurance and Enhancement	Partner Academic Lead, involved with the delivery of the programme programme(s) and Academic Quality colleagues.
1430 – 1445	Private Panel Meeting with refreshments	Panel only
1445 – 1530	Staff Development	Partner Academic Lead and those involved in the delivery of the programme(s)
1530 – 1615	Student Experience, Support and Representation	Partner Academic Lead and those involved with the delivery of the programme and pastoral/professional services staff
1615 – 1645	Private Panel Meeting	Panel only
1645 – 1700	Conclusions and Recommendations	Senior Management, Partner Academic and those involved with the delivery of the programme(s)

Annex 4 - Example Agenda Template – Desk-Based Review

Time	Meeting
0900 – 0930	Introductory Meeting
0930 – 1000	Skype meeting with Students
1000 – 1015	Refreshment Break
1015 – 1100	Facilities and Resources

1100 – 1230	Curriculum Development and Design, Learning, Teaching and Assessment
1230 - 1315	Lunch
1315 – 1415	Quality Assurance and Enhancement
1415 – 1500	Staff Development
1500 – 1515	Refreshment Break
1530 – 1615	Student Experience, Support and Representation
1615 – 1645	Conclusions and Recommendations