

Managing Partnerships: **Code of Practice**

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Part A: Introduction

All UK higher education must demonstrate the following Core Practices set out in The Revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2018):

“Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that

- the standards of its awards are credible and secure*
- the academic experience is high quality*

irrespective of where of how courses are delivered or who delivers them”

This Code of Practice is informed by the UK Quality Code for Higher Education Advice and Guidance: Partnerships (2018), and takes into consideration the Quality Assurance Agency’s ‘Qualifications Awarded by Two or More Degree-Awarding Bodies Characteristics’ (2015).

This Code of Practice:

- defines the types of partnership agreements approved for use at Brunel University London;
- describes the process for establishing, approving, managing, monitoring, and terminating partnership agreements;
- provides advice and guidance for staff who wish to develop partnerships.

1.1 Definition of Partnerships

An arrangement between two or more organisations to deliver aspects of teaching, learning, assessment and student support, leading to an award of Brunel University London.

1.2 Governance Arrangements

The University’s governance of collaborative provision is set out in [Senate Regulation 7](#). This mandatory Code of Practice, approved by Senate, ensures that the University is able to discharge effectively its responsibilities for the academic standards of its awards and the quality of learning opportunities provided for students with a partner.

Final approval of any partnership is granted by Senate.

1.3 Partnership Strategy

[BRUNEL UNIVERSITY LONDON 2030 - VISION](#)
[UNIVERSITY EDUCATION STRATEGY](#)
[UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY](#)
[ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT](#)

Strategic alignment with goals including:

- enhancing Brunel's national and international standing;
- developing and furthering the international footprint of the institution;
- facilitating access and progression routes to Brunel programmes;
- expanding opportunities for postgraduate study at Masters and doctoral levels;
- enhancing the student learning experience by sharing good practice and by enriching the curriculum with global perspectives;
- encouraging research and business links, in line with the University's position as a research-intensive institution;
- enhancing staff development both at Brunel and at partner institutions;
- supporting diverse income streams for the University.

The process seeks to ensure that all partnerships meet the following criteria:

- a clear contribution to the delivery of the University's strategic objectives as expressed in the Strategic Vision;
- adequate resources are committed to the partnership by Colleges and other areas of the University;
- legal, ethical and financial risks are satisfactorily assessed and mitigated;
- matters of academic quality and governance are satisfactorily addressed;
- environmental impacts are satisfactorily assessed and minimised;
- fully supported by the College(s)/Department(s)/Division(s) that will deliver it.

1.4 Key Enablers

From initiation to termination the life-cycle of a partnership is sustained by an iterative process between the College, the Academic Lead and/or Partnership Manager and stakeholders across the University. For a partnership to be successfully delivered, the following key enablers have been identified:

- An Academic Lead/Partnership Manager will be appointed, who is accountable for the partnership and owns the relationship with the Partner, acting as the point of contact.
- The partnership agreement (or contract) is the central focus of a shared understanding of obligations, roles and responsibilities. It is a "living" document to be shared and updated as required.
- The Global Engagement Office supports the College and the Academic Lead to ensure compliance with University regulations and policies.
- Communication across the University between key stakeholders as relevant to particular partnerships: Vice Provost (International and Academic Partnerships),

Global Engagement Office, Academic Lead/Partnership Manager, Vice Deans, Deputy Deans, Marketing & Recruitment, Admissions, Quality Assurance, Students Services, Legal, and Finance.

- Collaborative practices are essential in order to complete the proposal, steer it through the decision-making process in a timely manner, and produce the best outcomes for both the College, Partner and the University.

1.5 Types of Partnership

A comprehensive list of current partnership types can be found in Appendix 1, which fall into the following categories:

- **Entry:** refers to admission arrangements where students join a Brunel programme at the normal entry point at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Includes **Financial** agreements, usually with a sponsoring body.
- **Articulation with Advanced Standing:** refers to the admission of students from partner institutions directly onto advanced stages of a programme. The Brunel award is based only on the work undertaken as a student at Brunel.
- **Joint Delivery Programmes:** refers to the joint delivery of either a Brunel programme leading to a Brunel award; or a programme developed and delivered jointly with a partner organisation, leading to separate awards from Brunel and the partner.
- **Validation:** refers to the provision of validated elements that feed into Brunel programmes. The University currently validates programmes delivered by Brunel University London Pathway College London Brunel ([BPC](#)), which provides alternative Pre-Masters, Foundation and Level 4 programme elements for Brunel students.
- **Study Abroad/Exchange:** refers to agreements where students study at a partner institution (Brunel students are outgoing; partner students are incoming) for a defined period of time and where grades/marks are imported under a defined set of rules into the student's record. For Study Abroad and Student Exchange partnership proposal forms, please see the Partnerships Information for Staff page [here](#).

The University currently does not support the following partnerships models: Franchising; Joint Award programmes; validation of overseas institutions; level 6 'top-up' for overseas colleges.

1.6 Current Partnerships

A list of current Agreements including Partnerships, Collaborations, and Exchange and Study Abroad programmes is available from [here](#). This list of Partnerships is updated on a regular basis and managed by the Global Engagement Office.

1.7 Awards made in partnership:

- **Single Award:** describes an arrangement under which students study under a partnership agreement towards the achievement of a Brunel award.
- **Dual Award:** describes an arrangement under which two awarding institutions together provide a programme leading to separate awards being granted by both of them. A distinguishing feature is that the overall study period/volume of learning is longer/greater than that required for the individual awards, but shorter/less than if taken separately.
- **Joint Award:** An arrangement under which two or more awarding bodies together provide a programme leading to a single award made jointly by both, or all, institutions. A single certificate or document (signed by the competent authorities) attests to the successful completion of this jointly designed and delivered programme, replacing the separate institutional or national qualifications. *Brunel currently have no joint award partnerships.*

1.8 Other types of ‘working with others’:

The Revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education applies to all learning opportunities leading or contributing to a Brunel award. The following types of partnership arrangements are covered by other University regulations and procedures and are not considered in this Code of Practice:

- Placement learning;
- Professional work-based learning;
- [Apprenticeships](#)

For further information regarding the University’s management of placement learning, please see the [Placement Learning Policy](#) and [Managing Higher Education with Others](#).

Part B: Establishing Partnerships

2.1 Process

Partnership proposals can originate from various sources, including senior management, Colleges, individuals or prospective national or international partner institutions. In all cases there will need to be a preliminary evaluation of the fit of the partnership, after which the process will depend on the risk level of the partnership.

Developing new partnerships may be a lengthy process depending on the complexity, and appropriate time should be allowed. Anyone discussing potential partnerships with a partner institution should ensure that the prospective partner is aware of the likely time frames.

A single **New Partnership Proposal** form, available on the Partnerships Information for Staff page [here](#), is used throughout the process, with sections completed as the proposal moves through the various stages.

Please note that significant partnerships will have to be reported to the Office for Students. In such cases it is the responsibility of the College Vice-Dean (International) to notify the Vice-Provost (Education) at the earliest opportunity.

2.2 Stage 1: Preliminary Partnership Evaluation

Applies to all types of partnership.

In order to ensure that the University's Vision can be achieved, resources must be used in the most effective and efficient ways. This means that not all partnerships are appropriate to pursue, and in order to not waste time and effort on something that will not receive institutional approval, a preliminary evaluation of the proposal (**New Partnership Proposal Form: Section A**) is undertaken by the Vice Provost (International and Academic Partnerships) and Global Engagement Office, in consultation with the College Vice-Deans (International or Education). Any existing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) should be attached to the proposal.

This initial evaluation will agree and confirm the stages and information required (including whether an independent visit to the Partner needs to be undertaken) and the timeframe for partnership development. The outcome will be documented on a standard proforma (**New Partnership Proposal Form: Section B**) which will be shared with the University's Partnerships Team in the Global Engagement Office to inform them of the expected date by when an agreement will need to be ready.

2.3 Stage 2: Strategic Approval Form

Applies to all types of partnerships, but will depend on the complexity of the partnership and will be adapted according to the risk level of the proposal (established at Stage 1).

The Academic Lead/Partnership Manager is responsible for completing the Strategic Approval form (***New Partnership Proposal Form: Section C***). This stage will consider a range of information relevant to the partnership:

- The rationale for the proposal;
- The responsibilities of each party for:
 - admission;
 - delivery (including assessments);
 - student support (academic/pastoral/language);
 - student voice (feedback, student experience committees);
- The academic structure; student numbers; entry criteria;
- Implications for any accreditation;
- Risk management in case of partnership breakdown;
- Financial arrangements;
- Resource implications;
- Staffing arrangements;
- Environmental impact;
- Link to minutes of relevant College committees where the proposal have been discussed and approved.
- Partnerships Due Diligence form available [here](#) to gather information on the partner
- Draft agreement and schedules

Due Diligence is a desk based exercise that includes gathering as much publicly available information about the potential partner as possible; including for example ranking, financial accounts, details of other partnerships/collaborations, matters that might affect its reputation, links to its website, legal standing and previous quality reviews.

A draft agreement with schedules should be completed at this stage, which will ensure the partnership proposal approved by SASP-P is reflected in the draft agreement.

2.4 Stage 3: Strategic Approval Scrutiny Panel - Partnerships (SASP-P)

Proposals for Entry, Articulation with Advanced Standing and Study Abroad/Erasmus will normally be reported to SASP-P; Joint Delivery proposals will be discussed and approved for further development by SASP-P.

The information gathered above is considered by a panel chaired by the Vice Provost (Education), with representation from Colleges and Professional Services. SASP-P meets

bi-monthly and will provide feedback to inform development of the partnership and proposed programme using a standard template (***New Partnership Proposal Form: Section D***).

For low-risk partnerships College approval will normally be sufficient, and the Vice Provost (Education) and/or Vice Provost (International and Academic Partnerships) may approve such agreements by Chair's action, having scrutinised the proposal, draft agreement and schedules. Any agreements approved in this way will be noted at the subsequent meeting of SASP-P.

Following the meeting, all relevant Professional Services will be informed about the partnership so that appropriate arrangements can be made, including tagging of students with partnership identifier.

2.5 Stage 4: Partnership and Programme Development

Applies to all types of partnerships, but will be adapted according to the complexity of the proposed partnership (established at Stage 1) and feedback from SASP-P (Stage 3).

A Project Board may need to be established to oversee the detailed development of the proposed partnership and ensure its timely completion. The Board for large-scale partnerships, and/or those that have potentially high reputational benefit/risk, will be chaired by the Provost or a Vice-Provost. For smaller scale or low risk partnerships, the Board will normally be chaired by the Academic Lead or Partnership Manager. Membership will be dependent on the partnership proposal, but may include some/all of the following:

- Academic Lead/Partnership Manager
- Partnership Sponsor
- Vice Dean International or Education
- Deputy Dean Academic Affairs
- Head of Department or nominee
- Global Engagement Office
- Quality Assurance
- Individual external to College with partnership experience

The Project Board will be responsible for the following outcomes:

- Detailed programme or module design, including module mapping
- Completion of Partner Institution Library and Resource Checklist available [here](#)
- Establishing arrangements for partnership management
- Liaising with PSRBs/accrediting bodies
- Detailed financial arrangements
- Detailed risk and environmental mitigation
- Finalising the draft contract Schedules
- Finalising the draft agreement/contract

- Referring documents for approval to the appropriate committees/persons (e.g. Senate, Director of Finance)

Visit to proposed partners

The requirement for a visit to the proposed partner institution will be established at Stage 1, and undertaken by the Vice Provost (International and Academic Partnerships) or nominee. The purpose and details of any visits will be agreed by the Project Board, when information about particular aspects for follow-up will be available.

Programme delivery arrangements

Programmes delivered in partnership must provide appropriate learning opportunities for all students, and the academic content and operation of any proposed partnership programme must therefore receive particular attention by the Project Board.

If modification to an existing programme or development of a new programme is required, the University's normal process as set out in the [Programme Design, Development and Approval Policy Framework](#) will be followed, with the addition of University Education Committee /Global Engagement Office representation incorporated in the Design Review Panel. Additionally, the Review Panel will scrutinise the draft agreement and schedules to ensure they reflect the proposed partnership.

Student support arrangements

Evidence must be provided of the student support arrangements put in place by all partners. The degree-awarding body is responsible for the quality of the learning opportunities irrespective of who provides them and it is essential that where the delivery of a Brunel programme involves a partner, the University can satisfy itself regarding the quality of support available at a potential partner institution.

Students must receive clear information regarding their rights and responsibilities and the Student Handbook must be maintained to ensure that it remains accurate and reflects required practice. Appropriate contact information must be provided to ensure that support can be provided in a timely and effective manner.

Communication

Communication strategies between the partners should be outlined so as to clearly state the University's responsibility for ensuring that it retains control over the accuracy of the public information, publicity and promotional activity relating to the partnership. In this way, we will assure ourselves that this public information is fit for purpose and accessible both to prospective and current students.

2.6 Stage 5: Review of Agreement

The Global Engagement Office will have been informed of the timeline for the agreement at Stage 1, to coincide either with the presentation to SASP-P or Programme Approval event. For many partnerships the main agreements will be adapted from appropriate templates, with specifics being set out in Schedules. The draft agreement should be checked by the proposing Department and College and discussed with the Partner to ensure that the final version is acceptable to both/all partners (see below). Complex agreements will require discussion with the Legal team, and the Global Engagement Office will decide if legal consultation is needed in consultation with the Academic Lead/Partnership Manager.

2.7 Stage 6: Final Sign-Off

The Vice Provost (International and Academic Partnerships) should review all agreements before presenting them to the appropriate signing authority, as outlined by the Delegation of Authority for Agreements, for approval on behalf of Senate. Exceptionally, for complex or high-risk partnerships the agreement will be presented to a meeting of Senate and Council for approval before being presented to the parties for signature. It is customary for the partnership agreement to be sent to the proposed partner for their final consideration and signature, before being presented to the appropriate signing authority at Brunel for signing on behalf of Senate. It should be noted that Partner institutions also have to follow their own approval processes, and so this stage in the process can take some time.

Partnership agreements must not be entered into or signed by individuals in Colleges/ Departments/Divisions. They must only be signed by the Vice-Chancellor, Provost, Vice Provost (International and Academic Partnerships) or nominated delegate on behalf of Senate.

Part C: Managing Programmes Delivered in Partnership

3.1 Programme Management and Monitoring

An academic member of staff or partnerships manager at Brunel and the partner institution should be appointed as Academic Lead/Partnership Manager and will be charged with the operational management of the programme and partnership in compliance with the contractual arrangements as set out in the partnership agreement. This may require the formation of a Joint Partnership Board to ensure that there is joint management of the provision. The Global Engagement Office will assist with partner engagement and operations.

The partnership agreement is the focus of a shared understanding of obligations, roles and responsibilities. It will give the framework for the delivery and management of the programme, including arrangements for undertaking reviews of the partnership. Normal University annual monitoring, quality assurance and accreditation processes should be

followed for provision delivered in partnership, and any variation to normal Brunel procedures should be detailed in the agreement.

Arrangements for periodic review of the partnership, including accreditation and how often reviews should take place, should be included in the agreement. Reviews will take place at intervals not normally exceeding five years in order to allow partners to evaluate the on-going suitability of the partnership for all parties. The review should include both the academic and the contractual agreements. Any action plan arising from a review will be monitored annually via the University's Annual Monitoring process, which, for collaborative partnerships, is overseen by the University Education Committee.

3.2 Modifications to the Partnership Agreement

Modifications to the partnership agreement may be made by deed of variation or supplementary schedules and may be the result of annual monitoring or periodic review.

Modifications to the programme content, method of delivery or assessment patterns should be made following the normal University modification procedures but should be made in consultation with partners. Final approval for the modification will be given by Senate.

Part D: Terminating Partnerships

Partnership agreements may terminate through the natural completion of the agreed partnership or by either party initiating the termination of partnerships within the terms of the agreement.

If a College/Department/Division seeks termination of a partnership, it must seek advice from the Global Engagement Office who will advise on the contractual obligations. A case for termination must be prepared and presented to the Vice Provost (International and Academic Partnerships), who will make a recommendation to Senate for final approval.

The delivering College/Department/Division should plan for the orderly closing down of the partnership within the contracted period of notice. Any legal, financial or resource aspects must be managed as part of this process. Throughout the termination process, both partners must consider their obligations to offer support to students (or applicants) in order to ensure that they are able to complete their studies within the expected registration period.

Part E: Process Evaluation

The operation of this Code of Practice will be evaluated on an annual basis to ensure it continues to meet the needs of Colleges/Departments/ Divisions and the University; in particular, if the process is appropriately supporting the management of University

partnerships, and the alignment to the University strategic plan; if the process is appropriately managing resource issues in relating to new programme proposals; if there are opportunities to make the process more effective and efficient; and whether the process is appropriately managing risk.

Part F: Contact Details

Global Engagement Office

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Appendix 1: Brunel University London Partnerships Models

Routes	Type	Award	Description	Notes	Risk Level
Entry	Agreements with Embassies/Industry Partners	Brunel award as appropriate to level	Discount for suitably qualified applicants with sponsorship from embassies or from industry partners.	Fees/discounts to be specified in the partnership agreement.	●
	3+1/4+1		Suitably qualified graduates admitted to selected PGT programmes with a fee discount.	Fees/discounts to be specified in the partnership agreement.	●
	High Schools		Guaranteed consideration for admission (but not guaranteed entry) upon successful completion of an award at partner institution.	Discount or scholarship may be offered.	●
	Foundation - overseas provider				
	University or Polytechnic				
	Pre-Masters - overseas provider				
Advanced Entry (Articulation with Advanced Standing)	2+2/1+2 Articulation	Brunel UG award	Year 2 entry; award based on Brunel study only. Partner institution may choose to award a degree.	Discount or scholarship may be offered.	●
	3+1+1/3.5+0.5+1	Brunel PG award only, Partner UG award	3+ years at partner institution followed by one-term or year study abroad at Brunel. Partner awards UG degree at end of Year 4. Suitably qualified students may enter selected Masters programmes at Brunel.	Study Abroad year effectively serves as a pre-Masters programme.	●
	3+1 (accelerated UG degree)	Brunel PG award only. Partner UG award	Accelerated UG degree with pre-Masters bridging element at partner institution. Admission onto selected Masters programmes at Brunel. Both degrees awarded at the end of the fourth year.	Specific to China market. Lack of clarity on whether such an arrangement is recognised by the Chinese Ministry of Education.	●
Joint Delivery	Distance (on-line) Education	Brunel PGT award	On-line delivery partner provides learning support.	Currently used only for PGT programmes.	●
	TNE	Brunel or Dual UG award	TNE. Local/Flying Faculty delivery of Brunel or joint programme. Usually no UK-based component.	Fees to be specified in the partnership agreement. Dual degree: two separate certificates/qualification	●

	TNE	Brunel or Dual PGT award	TNE. Local/Flying Faculty delivery of Brunel or joint programme. No UK-based component.	Fees to be specified in the partnership agreement. Dual degree: two separate certificates/qualification	●
	1+1 Dual degree	Brunel and partner PG awards	1-year PG level study at local institution, 1-year PG at Brunel. Submission of one thesis which contributes to both awards.	Dual Degree: two separate certificates/qualifications	●
	1+1+1 Dual degree	Brunel and partner PG awards	Years 1 and 3: PG level study at partner, Year 2: PG level study at Brunel. Thesis completed at both institutions.	Dual Degree: two separate certificates/qualifications	●
	0.75+0.25 Masters	Brunel and partner PG awards	Students complete taught component at Brunel before returning to partner to complete dissertation component.	Fees charged at study-abroad rate.	●
	Joint PhD	Joint PhD award	Joint supervision of students and joint (single) award.	Complex to set up and operate.	●
	Off-campus PhD	Brunel PhD	Student studies at partner institution. Principal supervisor at Brunel. Recognised co-supervisor at partner institution.	Management is set out in a separate policy.	●
	PhD Without Residence	Brunel PhD	Possibly short UK-based components. Co-supervision. Flying faculty.	Investment required at start. Considerable ongoing expense.	●
Validation	Affiliate College UK	No Award	Validation of pre-masters, foundation and Level 4 elements feeding into UG and PGT programmes at Brunel.	Brunel presently validates programmes delivered by LBIC, our Navitas-operated affiliate college.	●
Study Abroad/ Exchange	3+1 (Study Abroad)	Partner UG award	Three years of UG study at partner institution plus one year study-abroad at Brunel.	No Brunel award. Fees charged at standard study-abroad rate.	●
	Study Abroad UG (incoming)	Partner UG award	Students complete study-abroad programme at Brunel and transfer credits back to partner institution.	Formal partnership discount on standard international fees.	●
	Study Abroad PGT (incoming)	Partner PG award	Students complete PG study-abroad programme at Brunel and transfer credits back to partner institution	Formal partnership discount on standard international fees.	●

	English Plus	No award	Customised programmes for partners offering pre-sessional English plus study-abroad package.	Potentially attractive in Japan, Korea and China.	●
	Erasmus Exchange (outgoing/incoming)	Brunel and partner UG award	Reciprocal exchange of students between Brunel and partner for one year/one term. Credit transfer.	Post-Brexit uncertainties. Low take-up amongst Brunel students. Brunel students pay reduced fees, but cost a barrier to participate. Balance of incoming/outgoing students a challenge.	●
	Non-Erasmus Exchange (outgoing/Incoming)	Brunel and partner UG award			●
	Non-Erasmus Exchange <u>and</u> Study Abroad	Brunel and partner UG award	Brunel (partner) students study at partner institution (Brunel) for one year/one term. Credit transfer.	Offer partner limited number of places for exchange students and charge additional students standard study-abroad rate.	●
	Bespoke Study-Abroad UG/PGT Programmes	May contribute to partner award	Customised study-abroad programmes designed to meet requirements of individual partners.	Resource intensive but may be worthy of consideration in the context of specific partnerships.	●
	Summer Schools	May contribute to partner award	Customised summer-school packages for partner institutions.	Resource intensive but very effective way of promoting Brunel to potential students.	●
Models not currently used at Brunel	2+1/3+1 Articulation ('Top-Up')	Brunel UG award	Year 3 entry. Credit transfer agreement or articulation partnership.	This is not a market that Brunel presently wishes to venture into.	N/A
	Franchising	Brunel UG/PG	Curriculum provided by Brunel and delivered by local institution	Brunel does not presently enter into franchising agreements.	N/A
	Joint Bachelor's or Masters degree	Joint award	Jointly designed and delivered curriculum leading to a single award	A model suitable only for particular types of partnerships that is not currently used at Brunel; any proposals for such a partnership would require at least 12 months additional preparation	N/A

	Overseas College/ University Validation	Foundation/UG/P GT/PhD	Validation of programmes offered by overseas partner.	This is not a market that Brunel presently wishes to venture into.	N/A
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