Partnership Principles and Procedures

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Partnership Principles and Procedures

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Introduction

As a small specialist College, partnerships with other educational institutions or organisations can bring the benefits of broadening horizons and enriching student and staff experience. The Teaching and Learning Strategy 2020 – 25 includes the following objectives:

- Partnership agreements with cognate institutions for student and staff exchange (2025)
- Research links with other institutions including St Mary's University, Twickenham (2022)
- A joint research project with at least one other institution (2025)
- Links with a range of organisations, both community and faith-based (enabler)
- Established collaborative relationships with key partners and begun mutually beneficial endeavours (2025)

The College will ensure that all partnership arrangements meet the expectations, practices and guiding principles of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education **Partnerships** (2018)

Partnership principles

The following principles[1] form a framework for UTC/PTFI Partnerships:

Strategic Fit

1. All partnerships must align with the Union Theological College Teaching and Learning Strategy 2020-25

2. All partnerships must align with the College's values and ethos.

Academic Quality and Standards

3. PTFI will be accountable for assuring the overall quality and academic standards of provision, regardless of the type of partnership.

4. PTFI will have in place governance procedures to authorise and oversee the development and closure of partnership arrangements and to monitor their effective operation. These will be detailed in Partnership Procedures.

5. The College will undertake due diligence enquiries, and non-legally binding written agreements will be signed prior to the commencement of student registration.

6. Provision delivered through partnership arrangements will be subject to quality procedures that are at least as rigorous, secure and open to scrutiny as those used for provision delivered by the College. These will be detailed in the Partnership Procedures.

7. PTFI will retain the authority and responsibility for awarding certificates and record of study in relation to student achievement where teaching is delivered by others.

8. PTFI, through the College, will monitor and evaluate all partnership arrangements to satisfy itself that the arrangements are achieving their stated outcomes and that academic standards and quality are being maintained. These will be detailed in the Partnership Procedures.

Records

9. The College will maintain accurate, up-to-date records of all partnership arrangements that are subject to a formal agreement.

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[1] Approved by QAPASAP 9 June 2021

Approved by Faculty on 23 March 2022

Partnership Procedures

Types of partnership

Partnerships that require a formal agreement include:

- validation arrangements whereby the PTFI awards a qualification for a programme which is developed and delivered by another institution.
- franchise arrangements whereby the PTFI awards a qualification for a programme which is developed by the College and delivered by another institution.
- recruitment arrangements whereby another organisation recruits on behalf of the College.
- work-based learning arrangements where students undertake placements as part of their accredited programme.
- student exchange with a partner institution

Approval

When a partnership is proposed, consideration should be given by PTFI to the strategic fit of the proposal before initial approval to proceed with development is given. PTFI will assign a Partnership Coordinator to liaise with the proposed partner to ensure that the approval processes run smoothly and, if approval is given, to continue to liaise with the partner in the operation, and review of the agreement. It should be noted that all partnership agreements must be approved by the Management Committee via the Finance, Property and Administration Panel (FPAP) and the Teaching and Learning Panel (TLP) prior to signature.

Institutional approval and programme approval procedures may proceed concurrently.

Institutional Approval

Due diligence must be carried out on the proposed partner. The decision whether or not to proceed with a proposed partnership is based upon strategic fit, an assessment of risk, potential benefits, and financial viability. When considering proposals, the College will need to be satisfied that:

- the proposal is a strategic fit
- the institution/organisation is of good standing and financially sound
- the proposal is viable in terms of resources and is fully costed
- the proposed arrangements will protect the quality of the student experience and the standard of the awards
- the institution/organisation has appropriate equality and diversity policies
- a proper assessment of the benefits and risks attached to the collaboration has been made and that there are actions/procedures in place to mitigate any risks
- appropriate institutional arrangements have been made
- consideration is given to any cultural, regulatory or regional-specific requirements affecting the proposed partner which may impact on the content or delivery of the collaborative arrangement
- there are no conflicts of interest between the collaborative institution and UTC/PTFI.
- For student exchange, that the learning resources and student support are at least comparable to those offered by the College

Programme Approval (validated programmes)

Where a programme is developed by the proposed partner, a validation document must be drafted and submitted to the College for approval. Appendix 1 includes the outline for this document. In addition, the Partnership Coordinator will liaise with the proposed partner to develop a schedule of responsibilities (see Appendix 2) which will be used as a basis for the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA).

The Quality Action Panel (QAP) will oversee these arrangements and will provide comments and recommendations to Faculty. A validation panel will be established consisting of members of Higher Education Advisory Panel, QAP and TLP. The validation panel will meet with the Programme Team from the proposed partner either in person or online. The College Administration will arrange the validation meeting and act as secretary to the meeting, producing a report with recommendations and conditions for approval with a deadline for a response by the partner. The report and response will be considered by Faculty and a recommendation made to PTFI. If programme approval is given, a non-legally binding MoA will be drawn up and signed by both parties. The MoA will normally cover a period of five years with a review carried out six months before the expiry date.

Recruitment Agreements

Where the College wishes to enter into a recruitment agreement with an organisation, due diligence must be followed and a MoA drawn up with particular reference to financial aspects. The agreement must be given initial approval to proceed by the Faculty and referred to the FPAP for final approval by the Management Committee.

Student Exchange Agreements

Where the College wishes to enter into a student exchange agreement with a partner institution, a MoA must be approved to indicate the maximum number of students; the programme involved; financial arrangements and support arrangements.

Monitoring and Review

Annual Review

All validated/franchised programmes will be required to submit reports through the Partnership Coordinator to Faculty for the Annual Review.

Module Review

All validated/franchised programmes will be required to submit reports through the Partnership Coordinator to Faculty for Module Review.

Periodic Review

All agreements will be for a maximum period of five calendar years. Where the agreement involves a validated or franchised programme there will be a full review of the programme and the agreement at least six months prior to the end of the agreement. The review will take the form of a validation with the addition of a review document which contains a commentary on the performance of the programme to include student numbers, retention and achievement data. The validation panel will interview students as well as staff who deliver the programme. The financial viability of the agreement will also form part of the validation. A report will be produced containing recommendations and conditions for further approval and commendations where appropriate. The report and the programme team response will be submitted to Faculty and a recommendation made to PTFI. A new MoA will be drawn up and signed by both parties following approval by the Management Committee of the College.

Recruitment/Other Partnership Agreements

All other agreements will be reviewed at least six months prior to the date of expiry. These reviews will consider financial viability, continued strategic fit and, where appropriate, the student experience. The QAP will initiate the review and where appropriate the renewal will be recommended to Faculty prior to submission to the FPAP for final approval by the Management Committee.

Appendix 1: Validation Document Outline

Introduction

Information about the institution/organisation to include mission, history, and financial standing.

Rationale for the collaboration

Fit with Union Theological College

Rationale for the programme

Market need

Marketing and Recruitment

Proposed marketing strategy and target student numbers. Admissions procedure and widening access policy.

Programme

An outline of the proposed programme in the form of a programme specification.

Modules

Module specifications for each module

Student Support

Teaching Resources

Teaching facilities, academic staff CVs, Library and IT facilities, use of VLE and hybrid teaching.

Appendix 2: Schedule of Responsibilities

Collaborative Provision - Schedule of Responsibilities

Schedule of responsibilities for the collaborative arrangement between Union Theological College and Partner

Contract dates (from and to)	
Prog name and award	
Location(s) of study	
Type of partnership arrangement (Franchise/Validation/Flying Faculty etc)	
Main contact name (College Partnership Coordinator)	
Main contact (Partner)	

Details of responsibilities:

Function	Details of agreed arrangement	Who is responsible/involved?	When/where does the activity take place? Detail key deadlines here if applicable	Actions
Visits by Partnership Coordinator				
Admissions/registration processes including induction				
Extenuating circumstances process				
Complaints process (non-academic)				
Academic Appeals process				
Academic Misconduct process				
Access to College resources e.g. VLE, Library etc.				
Marks entry process				
Exam Board arrangements (to be updated annually)				
Graduation Ceremony/processes				

including any certification requirements				
External examiner(s) name				
Programme Review				
Student Services e.g. wellbeing/financial support				