

COLLABORATIVE PROVISION PROCEDURE Issue 12

Introduction

The purpose of this procedure is to enable the consideration and, where appropriate, approval for third party providers to deliver programmes of education and training for which University College Birmingham (UCB) has validated approval. The aim of detailing the approach to collaborative provision in the form of a procedure is to make the rigour of UCB quality systems open and transparent; to ensure the consistency of approach across curriculum and management areas and to optimise the effectiveness and efficiency of the approvals process. In all considerations for collaborative provision approval, the primary aim is to ensure that high standards of provision are maintained and that students at third party providers, studying on UCB devolved programmes, have an experience of equivalent quality to students at UCB.

For the purposes of this procedure the term collaborative provision is taken to mean any collaborative arrangement including franchise or licence agreements, whereby a programme for which UCB has validated authority is delivered by a third party provider, irrespective of contractual arrangements which may vary the ownership of students' registration and hence funding arrangements.

Aims

The prime aim of entering into a collaborative arrangement is to 'widen participation' and to share and develop good practice, thereby making high quality programmes of study available to students who would not normally have such an opportunity within their local area.

UCB recognises its responsibilities for maintaining standards across all of its provision including programmes delivered by collaborative partners, and its associated commitment to all students, clients and stakeholders of UCB. This includes ensuring the good name of UCB and its reputation for quality provision is not compromised by entering into a collaborative agreement with a provider of unsubstantiated ability to deliver and manage a UCB programme to the required standards.

UCB will provide applicant organisations with clear requirements for information to support a collaborative provision application and they must pass a strict quality assessment before approval to deliver a UCB programme. The approved collaborative partner will then be regularly monitored by UCB to ensure that high standards are maintained.

If approval for the collaborative provision agreement is granted, a contract will be drawn up between the partner and UCB stating the conditions of the agreement and the responsibilities of both institutions with regard to programme delivery, support, monitoring, standards and the contractual and financial basis of the agreement.

Every collaborative provision agreement will be time constrained and subject to a review and re-validation process at set intervals as determined by the Validation and Approvals Committee of the Academic Board.

Responsibilities

The UCB Collaborative Provision Working Group (CPWG) is responsible for approving the initial investigation of a collaborative proposal and conducting an assessment of the merits of the case. If a prima facie case exists, the CPWG may recommend the proposal and associated evidence from the investigation is forwarded to the Validation and Approvals Committee for consideration.

The Curriculum and Quality Unit is responsible for identifying the requirements of the collaborative provision appraisal process; for organising meetings of the CPWG and the Validation and Approvals Committee; for seeking ratification of the collaborative arrangement and for notifying all relevant bodies.

Representatives of Academic Management and the Curriculum and Quality Unit are responsible for co-ordinating collaborative applications and ensuring a quality assessment visit takes place where required.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Curriculum, Teaching and Learning), as Chair of the Validation and Approvals Committee, will agree the membership of the Validation and Approvals Committee and the protocol of the validation event

The Academic Board, through its Validation and Approvals Committee is responsible for approving any proposal for a new, amended or re-validated collaborative provision arrangement, subject to ratification by the UCB Board of Governors.

For new and existing collaborative provision partnerships UCB will identify a Relationship Manager from the relevant School to oversee the progress of the collaborative programme and provide support to the collaborative team. This will normally be the relevant UCB Head of Department or Deputy Dean.

UCB will nominate a Liaison Manager to work with the collaborative partner to ensure the appropriate programme support and monitoring activity is carried out. The Liaison Manager will normally carry out the quality assessment visits as specified in the UCB 'Guidelines for Collaborative Provision Quality Assurance Handbook'. The Liaison Manager will be assisted and supported in his/her duties by the Relationship Manager regarding academic support and intervention and by the Director of Quality Systems for quality assessment visit protocol and arrangements.

The progress of the Collaborative Provision Agreement will be subject to an annual Strategic Review by UCB Management. This meeting will be chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Curriculum, Teaching and Learning) or nominee. The purpose of this meeting will be the review of the progress of the collaborative partnership, the security of academic standards and the quality of the student experience. The review will also ensure the partnership is progressing as specified in the agreement and is still meeting the strategic aims and objectives of UCB.

Procedure

1. The Chief Executive or relevant senior manager of the applying institution may lodge a formal written request with UCB representatives.
2. The UCB Collaborative Provision Working Group (CPWG) will consider whether the proposed agreement is in the best interests of both institutions, their students and communities and whether the collaborative provision arrangement is permissible by the awarding body for the programme(s).
3. If the CPWG decide to proceed, the applying institution will be requested to provide a report and documentary evidence to support their application. The content and nature of the report (refer to the Annex of this procedure for the full information requirement) will be dependant on the programme concerned and will be determined by the Curriculum and Quality Unit who will co-ordinate the investigation and appraisal process. The report must include the following information:
 - a. Details (CVs) of staff who will teach on the programme, including numbers, qualifications and relevant experience.
 - b. UCB and specific resources identified to support the programme.
 - c. Staff development information including policies, budgets, records and activities planned for staff teaching and supporting the programme.
 - d. Quality assurance and control systems and arrangements
 - e. Vocational and work placement records (where relevant)
 - f. Evidence of financial viability and budget to support the programme.
 - g. Details of relevant quality assessments, audits or inspections that comment on the quality of provision.
4. Representatives of UCB will carry out a Quality Assessment Visit at the applying institution to determine their ability to deliver the proposed programme(s). The visit will include meetings with staff and management, an inspection of the facilities and resources, an appraisal of quality systems and assessment practice and arrangements for student support.
5. The UCB representatives will submit a report to the CPWG and Validation and Approvals Committee of the Academic Board, who may make the following decisions concerning the collaborative provision application:
 - a. That the collaborative provision agreement be approved, subject to the ratification of the UCB Board of Governors.
 - b. That the collaborative provision agreement be approved, subject to the ratification of the UCB Board of Governors, with either or both, binding 'condition(s)' that must be addressed or 'recommendation(s)' that should be seriously considered in the interests of quality improvement.
 - c. That the applicant re-submits the application at a future point.
 - d. That the collaborative provision agreement proposal is rejected.
6. The Academic Board will consider the outcome of the Validation and Approvals Committee deliberations, and will ratify the decision or reject the collaborative provision agreement proposal.

7. If the approval is ratified, a contract will be issued by UCB and approved by the Chief Executives of both institutions. This will state the terms on which the collaborative provision agreement is approved and will clearly state the responsibilities of both institutions.
8. The approved collaborative provision agreement will be subject to specific and rigorous quality monitoring arrangements. UCB will identify a Relationship Manager to oversee and support the progress of the collaborative programme and a Liaison Manager who will work with the collaborative partner to ensure the appropriate programme support and monitoring activity is carried out. The Liaison Manager will liaise with the collaborative partner with regard to expected quality standards and the satisfactory progress of the programme. The Liaison Manager will normally make two quality assessment visits to the collaborative partner each year. A quality assessment visit may be made without prior announcement. The protocol for the collaborative provision quality assessment visit is specified in the 'Guidelines for Collaborative Provision Quality Assurance' document. The quality assessment visits will include for example:
 - a. The checking of programme content and delivery to ensure it is consistent with the standards required by UCB
 - b. The checking of student records and tracking of progress
 - c. The moderation of assessment and assessed work
 - d. Meetings with the delivery team and managers
 - e. The checking of quality and support systems and activity
 - f. Observation of teaching and learning whenever possible
 - g. The checking of programme facilities and resources including staffing and staff development
 - h. The checking of student placement records (where relevant) and contact with industry
 - i. Meetings with the student cohort
9. Records relating to the process of Validation and Quality Assessment Monitoring will be held by the Curriculum and Quality Unit.

ANNEX

Collaborative Provision Recognition Requirements Guidance to applicants

This Annex specifies the information requirements for the initial quality assessment of an institution applying for a collaborative provision agreement with UCB.

Information required from institutions to support an application for programme recognition and/or collaborative agreement.

1. Precise details of the programme(s) subject to the proposal including:
 - The title of the programme
 - The aims and objectives of the programme
 - The Unit components with details of each including, teaching and learning hours, indicative content/syllabus, reading lists

- Marketing information including Prospectus
2. The 'Curriculum Vitae' of Staff relevant to the programme including:
- Names of staff together with programme responsibilities
 - Qualifications and teaching experience (with dates and awarding institution)
 - Relevant industrial experience (with dates)
 - Details of any independent research, publications and consultancy
3. General Resources
- Details of general facilities such as teaching rooms, practical areas, recreation areas, the Library and the availability of Information Technology
 - Details on budgeting and the financial support available for the programme and students
4. Equipment and Learning Resources
- Details of the resources available for student learning on the programme
 - Details of Library stock, including texts, journals and software relevant to the programme
 - Information on other learning resources to support the programme
5. Assessment
- Information on assessment strategies, including methods and documentation
 - Details of assessment and moderation procedures and practice
 - Relevant sample assessments to be enclosed, together with aims and objectives and marking criteria
6. Student Progress and achievement
- the profile of students on relevant programmes, to include, numbers, age, gender and Nationality
 - Trends in recruitment numbers, achievement, retention and destination information
 - Arrangements for the academic and pastoral support of students
7. Quality Assurance (for the proposed programme and the Institution)
- Details of quality assurance systems, including outcomes and reports
 - Staff development information including policies, budgets, records and activities planned for staff teaching and supporting the programme.
 - Details of student satisfaction monitoring, outcomes and opportunities for students to comment on their experience
 - Information on external moderation and quality assessments and reports
 - Details of action plans for improvement and their review and implementation
 - Details of any work experience or placement arrangements (where applicable)
 - Equal opportunities policy and practice
 - Student complaints and appeals procedures, including assessment appeals
 - Details of relevant quality assessments, audits or inspections that comment on the quality of provision.
8. Financial viability:
- Evidence of the Institution's ability to adequately resource and support the programme(s)

9. Partnerships

- Details of partnerships and links with other institutions or providers, both existing and recent

Where an initial quality assessment visit is undertaken, in addition to the satisfactory appraisal of the information stated above, UCB representatives will carry out the following additional quality assessment activities:

- a) Physical Resources
 - A tour and inspection of the programme specific and cross-college resources and facilities, including classrooms, learning environments and recreation facilities
- b) Equipment and Learning Resources
 - A tour and inspection of programme specific resources and equipment
 - An inspection of the Library facilities and resources
- c) Assessment
 - A review of representative samples of assessed student work
 - A review of procedures for assessment, moderation and tracking
- d) Students
 - A private discussion with groups of students
- e) Quality Assurance
 - To review arrangements for staff meetings and student/staff meetings
 - To review contacts with industry and employers, including staff/student visits, visiting speakers and industrial liaison records.
- f) Programme Staff
 - To discuss with programme staff issues relating to recruitment quality of teaching and learning and student support.

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