Annex O: Quality Assurance Procedures for Programmes of Study at Partner Colleges Leading to University Awards

1. Introduction

These procedures are to be used in connection with the quality assurance of programmes of study which are delivered by Partner Colleges and which lead to the award of a certificate, diploma or degree of the University.

2. Approval of New Programmes of Study and New Modules

2.1 Initial Development

There should be consultation at an early stage with the relevant University School(s) with regard to all aspects of proposed new programmes of study. Partner Colleges and Academic School Liaison Officers should ensure that the Head of School is consulted during these discussions.

2.2 Submission to Executive Group - Outline Planning Approval

2.2.1 Partner Colleges must submit an outline proposal for approval by the University’s Executive Group (EG).

2.2.2 Outline Proposals should attach the business plan approved within the partner institution, indicate that the partner will be solely responsible for providing resources and facilities sufficient to staging the programme and take account of the following requirements:

i. Evidence of need and demand for the programme as suggested by market research, to include projected student numbers

ii. How it is proposed that the programme will be resourced. The internally approved business plan should be provided;

iii. Any special resources required (e.g. staff, space, library, IT, learning technologies, training, timetable), and the implications for the partner of putting these in place;

iv. The cover available in the partner institution if key parts of the programme depend on an individual member of staff for their delivery;

v. A statement of which existing programmes, if any, will be withdrawn as a result of the new proposal.

2.2.3 The outline proposal should first have been approved within the partner Institution and should be passed to the Faculties Support Office which will ensure the proposal is submitted to the Executive Group. This proposal should indicate whether the programme is being put forward under a Franchised, Validated or Validated Plus arrangement1.

2.2.4 Partner Colleges are not required to submit a business case to the University’s Business Case Committee. Permission from EG will be sufficient to proceed with the development of the proposed curriculum and the production of programme, module and other relevant documentation as set out at 2.4.3 below. The School Academic

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1 Franchised provision is approved by the University and is supported by University student numbers. Validation Plus provision is approved by the University and is supported by the College's student numbers; students also have access to a number of University services. Validation provision is approved by the University and supported by the College's student numbers but students do not have access to University services.
Liaison Officer should be consulted as necessary with regard to the development of the curriculum and production of relevant paperwork.

2.3 Submission to the School

2.3.1 Following Executive Group consideration detailed proposals for new Partner College programmes of study and new modules should be prepared in accordance with the requirements of Annexes B: Approval and Withdrawal of Modules and C: Approval and Withdrawal of Taught Programmes of the University’s Code of Practice for Quality Assurance for Taught Programmes. The detailed proposals should first be approved within the College by the appropriate body.

2.3.2 If it is satisfied that it is appropriate to do so, the Partner College should submit a proposal for a new programme of study or new module via the Academic School Liaison Officer to the Education Committee or Graduate Studies Committee of the appropriate cognate School of the University.

2.3.3 If the School Committee considers the proposal to be satisfactory it will recommend it for approval by the relevant Faculty Committee. Where there is no cognate University School, the proposal should be routed directly to the relevant Faculty Education Committee or Graduate Studies Committee.

2.3.4 When making such programme submissions Partner Colleges should ensure that the information required in 2.4.3 below is submitted to the School together with a report on the outcome of its internal consideration of the programme.

2.3.5 If it is satisfied that it is appropriate to do so, the School will upload the paperwork arising from the proposal onto PMAS for consideration by the relevant Faculty Committee.

2.4 Faculty Consideration

2.4.1 The Faculty Education/Graduate Studies Committee will have discretion to determine the need for the Faculty Panel and the constituency of the Faculty Panel, within the following parameters:

i) The Faculty Panel should consist normally of either two members of the Faculty or, at the discretion of the Faculty Education/Graduate Studies Committee, for example in cases where appropriate subject area expertise is not available within the Faculty, one member of the Faculty and an appropriate External Adviser.

ii) Where a proposal contains non-cognate provision, it will be the expectation that normally an External Adviser will be appointed to the Panel.

iii) Where an External Adviser is required for a Panel, the Partner College should make a recommendation to their cognate School.

iv) Where an External Adviser is not appointed to a Panel, the programme will require the support in writing of an appropriate External Adviser. The Partner College should identify the relevant External Adviser and they should be asked to provide a statement on the appropriate pro-forma and in line with the requirements as detailed in Annex C: Appendix E: Guidance on the use of External Advisers for Programme Approval.

2.4.2 Where the proposal contains non-cognate provision, and/or provision in a subject area where the College has not previously had provision, it will be the expectation that normally a visit will take place.

2.4.3 Where a visit by a Panel is determined to be necessary, the documentation required

Note that in principle Partner Colleges should not be permitted to submit for approval any programmes of study in subjects that are non-cognate to Kent.
for consideration by such panels is as follows:

- the proposed programme for the visit (see the guidance in Appendix A to this Annex)
- rationale for the proposal
- programme specification
- module specifications
- module mapping document
- staff management structure and CVs of core teaching staff
- statement of available physical resources
- self-assessment of the infrastructure of support for student learning and student welfare
- the relevant extract of the Student Voice Committee minutes that notes the student discussion of the proposed programme specification (see Annex M Student Evaluation, section 5.10)
- requirements of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (where applicable)
- reports from any previous stages of the approval process, where available.

2.4.4 The Faculty Panel will report in writing to the Faculty Committee on the outcome of its consideration and will include recommendations on the following matters:

i) on the appropriateness of content and standards of the curriculum with respect to the level and nature of the award; or 

ii) for non-cognate provision, and/or provision in a subject area where the College has not previously had provision, on the adequacy of the teaching and learning facilities;

iii) that the staff engaged in delivering the programme are appropriately qualified for their role.

iv) whether the proposal should be approved or approved subject to conditions (for example subject to provision of additional resources).

2.4.5 Where it is determined that a Panel is not required, the Faculty Education/Graduate Studies Committee should consider the submission via PMAS in the standard way.

2.4.6 If satisfied that it is appropriate to do so, the Faculty should forward a proposal for a new programme of study to the Programme Approval Sub-Committee (PASC). Where a Faculty Panel had been convened to consider the proposal, its report on the outcome of its consideration should be provided. The proposal as submitted to PASC need not be accompanied by module specifications since Faculty Committees are authorised to approve new modules.

2.5 Module Approval

2.5.1 Any new module(s) proposed separately to a new programme should be submitted to relevant School committee via the Academic School Liaison Officer of the appropriate cognate School of the University. If the School Committee considers the module(s) to be satisfactory it will recommend them for approval by the Faculty via PMAS.

2.5.2 Where a module is non-cognate the Partner College should provide a supporting statement from a suitably qualified external adviser from the relevant subject area.
2.6 Programme Amendment

2.6.1 Substantial amendments to approved programmes should proceed in line with 2.3 and 2.4 above.

2.6.2 Minor amendments to existing programme of study may be agreed by the School Education/Graduate Studies Committee. The School Academic Liaison Officer should be consulted in advance about all such changes.

2.6.3 Guidance on what constitutes major or minor amendments reference can be found in the module and programme specification approval risk table, which can be viewed at http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/documents/quality-assurance/guidance/pdf/approvalrisktable.pdf.

2.7 Module Amendment

2.7.1 Where major amendments are being made to a module that is non-cognate the Partner College should provide a supporting statement from a suitably qualified external adviser from the relevant subject area.

2.7.2 For further guidance on what constitutes major or minor amendments reference can be made to the module and programme specification approval risk table, which can be viewed at http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/documents/quality-assurance/guidance/pdf/approvalrisktable.pdf.

3 Credit Transfer and APL

3.1 Applications for Credit Transfer and APL made by students studying for a University award at a Partner College or Validated Institution (as appropriate) will have their application assessed and a decision made by the relevant Programme Leader/Admissions Tutor for the programme in question. Recommendations will then be considered for approval by the relevant Faculty Committee (i.e. FEC or FGSC). All decisions will be reported to the APL Board.

3.2 All APEL claims and portfolios should also be referred to the University so that they can be considered and approved by the relevant Faculty Committee.

3.3 All claims (Credit Transfer/APCL/APEL) MUST be made and approved prior to the start of the modules for which credit is being claimed via these means.

4 Annual Monitoring

4.1 Partner College programmes will be reviewed annually in accordance with the requirements of the University Code of Practice for Quality Assurance Annex E: Annual Monitoring.

4.2 The College will submit an annual monitoring report on each programme and on any module that meets the required criteria as detailed in Annex E for consideration by the relevant University School Committee.

4.3 This report should be submitted through the University Academic School Liaison Officer. In going forward to the relevant School Committee, the report will be accompanied by the report of the University Academic School Liaison Officer or Programme Adviser.

4.4 The relevant School Committee should comment on its consideration of the annual monitoring report and any associated reports within its annual monitoring report to the Faculty.
5. Periodic Review of Programmes

5.1 Partner College programmes will be subject to Periodic Programme Review (PPR) in accordance with the requirements of the University Code of Practice for Quality Assurance Annex F.

5.2 Programmes will be reviewed as part of the PPR of the cognate School.

5.3 As part of this process, where considered necessary, the University may require that a pre-review of Partner College provision be carried out by the Chair and Secretary of the PPR. The pre-review will establish any key areas related to this provision that need to be drawn to the attention of the PPR panel. To support the Chair and Secretary in determining the necessity of pre-review, cognate Schools will be required to include a section in their Critical Evaluation Document relating to the academic oversight of Partner College programmes.

5.4 The relevant Faculty Board will determine the year in which each programme will be subject to periodic review, and will receive reports of PPR Panels and the response of the College to such reports. The Faculty Board will forward such reports, together with its views on them, to the Education Board.

6. Boards of Examiners

6.1 A Board of Examiners will be appointed for each programme of study. The Board will comprise:

- One or more External Examiner(s), appointed by or on behalf of Senate and Council on the recommendation of the relevant Faculty Board.
- At least one University of Kent examiner, who shall be appointed as Chair of the Board of Examiners by the relevant Faculty Board. *
  * This will normally be the relevant Academic School Liaison Officer.
- College examiners, normally comprising those teaching the programme, will be appointed by the relevant Faculty Board on the recommendation of the College, one of whom shall be appointed as Deputy Chair (normally the programme leader or director). See 5.2 below for further details regarding the Appointment of College Examiners.

6.2 The CVs of all Partner College staff teaching on programmes leading to University of Kent credit or award should be sent to the Manager of the Partnership Development Unit at the University on both an annual basis and whenever a new teaching appointment made throughout the academic year.

6.2.1 For those Partner College staff being appointed as examiners, the CV(s) will be forwarded by the Manager of Partnership Development Unit to the relevant Academic School Liaison Officer, who will review each CV prior to the staff member’s appointment as examiner. If satisfied, the Academic School Liaison Officer will forward the CV(s) to the Faculties Support Office (FSO) with a recommendation that the staff concerned be approved by the University as an examiner by the relevant Faculty Board.

6.2.2 Should the Academic School Liaison Officer determine that, on the basis of the information provided, it would be inappropriate to approve a member of teaching staff from the Partner College as a Kent examiner, this outcome will be relayed to the Manager of the Partnership Development Unit, together with a recommendation for
any professional development activities that would require implementation prior to the resubmission of the staff member’s CV.

6.2.3 The Manager of the Partnership Development Unit will report all outcomes on the consideration of teaching staff for approval as Kent examiners to the relevant Partner College.

6.3 Boards of Examiners will act in accordance with the University Code of Practice, Annex J: Meetings of Boards of Examiners, except as otherwise specified below.

6.4 Before each meeting of a Board of Examiners, the Deputy Chair shall convene a meeting of a small number of internal members of the Board of Examiners (i.e. the Deputy Chair and normally no more than three members) to agree recommendations to be made to the Board regarding students about whom medical or other concessionary evidence has been received. The concessionary scale provided in Annex J, section 5 (Conventions for the Application of Concessionary Measures), should be considered when agreeing such recommendations, along with any matters raised in the annual Guidance for Examiners published by the QA Office.

6.5 Before each meeting of a Board of Examiners, and separate to the Concessionary Committee meeting, the Deputy Chair may convene a pre-meeting to consider other matters as it deems appropriate. Such matters might include deciding, based on the profile of marks, which candidates should have a viva voce examination (where such an option remains available under the regulations), which candidates should be drawn to the attention of the External Examiner, recommendations to be made regarding borderline candidates where such remain in operation, reviewing the range of marks awarded for each module and identification of other issues requiring discussion by the Board of Examiners. The identities of candidates shall not be made known to examiners during the course of this meeting.

6.6 Board of Examiners will meet at least annually. The Deputy Chair will be responsible for making arrangements for meetings and for informing members of those arrangements.

6.7 The Deputy Chair will ensure that all members of the Board of Examiners receive detailed information about the programme, including assessment requirements; that arrangements for approval of examination papers and monitoring of internal marking are agreed between themselves and the External Examiner(s); that draft examination papers and samples of student work are sent to the External and University examiners as agreed; that appropriate documentation, including an agenda, is provided at meetings of Boards of Examiners and that all marks are entered on the Student Data System in time for the Board. The Deputy Chair will also ensure that the Board of Examiners is informed any recommendations of the Concessionary Committee relating to evidence of mitigating circumstances submitted by students (see section 6.4 above).

6.8 The Deputy Chair will also ensure that the lists showing recommendations for the award of certificates, diplomas or degrees, as prepared by Medway Student Administration are provided at the Board.

6.9 The College will appoint a member of its staff to act as Secretary to the Board of Examiners.

The Secretary will record the decisions made by the Board including the consideration given to specific cases. Most decisions are recorded on the composite mark sheet which is signed and appended to the minutes (the format of the minutes should follow that of the agenda).

6.10 The Deputy Chair will ensure that students are informed of decisions made regarding their results and any conditions which students have to fulfil in order to progress. Students should be informed that final year marks and classifications remain provisional until the pass list has been signed by the relevant Faculty Dean.
6.11 A representative from the cognate School’s administrative staff will be in attendance at the Board (normally the School Administration Manager or nominee), who will ensure that final composite mark sheets are signed and who will ensure that pass lists are circulated in the same way as pass lists for University programmes; and sent to the deputy chair in the College.

6.12 The representative from the cognate School’s administrative staff will also advise on regulations and conventions and their interpretation at the Board. In the case of HNC and HND programmes, specific Classification Conventions can be found at http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/credit-framework/creditinfoannex12.html.

7. Reports of External Examiners

7.1 External Examiners are required to submit an annual report to the University via the online External Examiners Report Submission System (EERSS) within four weeks of the main annual meeting of the Board of Examiners. Reports submitted via EERSS can be accessed by relevant parties (Chair of the Board of Examiners, Head of School, Faculties Support Officer and Dean of Faculty) on the University website via the following link: https://sharepoint.kent.ac.uk/academic/qa/eerss/Lists/External%20Examiner%20Report/qa_reports_page.aspx.

7.2 Where the Deputy Chair of the Board of Examiners does not have access to the External Examiners’ report via EERSS, a hard copy of the report will be provided by the Quality Assurance Office. Within four weeks of receipt of the report, the Deputy Chair of the Board of Examiners will provide the Chair with a commentary on the report and an account of any actions planned in response to the External Examiners’ recommendations.

7.3 The Chair of the Board of Examiners will submit the official response to the External Examiner(s) report(s) via EERSS, first taking into consideration the commentary provided by the Deputy Chair of the Board.

8. Student Feedback

8.1 Partner Colleges should seek the views of students on each of the modules they have taken and the programme they have taken.

8.2 This feedback should be obtained via questionnaires developed and administered by each College and where applicable by the National Student Survey. Partner Colleges should also establish a Student Voice Committee for each programme.

8.3 Partner Colleges should take into account the requirements of Annex M: Student Evaluation of the Code of Practice for Taught Programmes when designing feedback mechanisms. Partner Colleges should also take into account the requirements for Student Voice Committees as detailed in Annex M, section 5.

8.4 In completing Annual Monitoring Report requirements, Partner Colleges should make reference to consideration of student feedback on programmes.

8.5 Students on Partner College programmes will also be entitled to participate in the annual survey carried out by the University requesting direct feedback on their learning experience.

3 see http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/extexaminers/eerss.html
9. **Academic School Liaison Officers**

9.1 For all types of Partner College arrangements, a member of the University School’s staff will be appointed to act as an Academic School Liaison Officer who will:

- Act as the Chair of the Board of Examiners for the programme concerned to:
  - review the marking of and confirm the marks to be awarded for all modules for which the School holds responsibility;
  - make recommendations for the award of Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees to students who have successfully completed programmes of study for which the School holds responsibility;
  - make recommendations with regard to progression, referrals and termination of registration of students taking programmes of study for which the School holds responsibility.
  - Ensure concessionary cases are not permitted to be re-opened during Board proceedings;
  - Ensure the reasons for awarding a student a higher class of degree than indicated by his/her marks are recorded on or appended to the official record of decisions made by the Board of Examiners;
- Ensure the official record of decisions made by the Board of Examiners has been confirmed and signed by them, the Deputy Chair and the External Examiners.

- Assist with curriculum development and receive proposals for new modules and programmes at an early stage in their development.
- Assist the college in the nomination of External Examiners and external periodic review panel members.
- Ensure that the relevant School Education Committee or School Graduate Studies Committee has effective oversight of quality assurance procedures such as external examining, annual monitoring, and ensure that periodic programme reviews have been completed as required for the programme concerned.
- Receive agendas and minutes of programme team meetings.
- Be a suitable candidate to be a member of any review panels established to undertake periodic programme reviews in Schools with similar provision.
- Inform College Programme Directors/co-ordinators about School meetings, engaging them in the meetings as appropriate.
- Facilitate liaison between relevant University staff and staff and students at the College, in particular with regard to progression from the College to the University.
- Inspect samples of marked student work (the purpose of such inspection will not be to moderate internal marking but to obtain information about student learning and achievement).
- Review the standard of student learning and achievement.
- Review the effectiveness of the strategy and criteria for assessment.
- Review whether marking is undertaken rigorously and in accordance with assessment criteria.
• Review whether arrangements for approval of examination papers and monitoring of internal marking are undertaken in accordance with the University’s Code of Practice.

• Submit an annual report to the University via the Quality Assurance Office on the quality of the programme and the learning experience of the students as per the template provided. The report will be copied to the nominated Partner College contact and will be forwarded by the Academic School Liaison Officer to the School Education Committee for consideration as part of annual programme monitoring. The report will be included in the School’s report to the Faculty Education Committee under annual monitoring procedures.

• Agree a schedule of visits to the college during the academic year for the purpose of meeting the responsibilities set out above (to visit on three occasions, once per term, one of which must be made in order to attend the meeting of the Board of Examiners and, where possible, one of which should include a meeting with students).

• Submit the official response to the External Examiner(s) report(s) via EERSS4, first taking into consideration the commentary provided by the Deputy Chair of the Board.

• Review the College’s admissions decisions and ensure that they are made in compliance with University admissions protocols.

• Review the appointment of new Partner College staff appointed to be examiners on programmes leading to University of Kent credit and awards. This will include reviewing CVs on an annual basis, and whenever there is a new appointment made throughout the academic year, prior to partner college staff’s appointment as examiners. Once agreed, staff CVs will be forwarded to the FSO for further approval of the staff as examiners by the relevant Faculty Board. Full details of the Appointment of Examiners process can be found in section 6.2 above.

9.2 Academic School Liaison Officers should be academic members of staff in a related subject area and they should ideally be familiar with Higher Education in Further Education Colleges (e.g. HNC/D qualifications), although briefing and guidance in this area can be provided.

10. Programme Advisers

10.1 Where the University does not itself have appropriate subject expertise, it may appoint a Programme Adviser who will:

• Receive agendas and minutes of programme team meetings.

• Be a non-chairing member of the Board of Examiners.

• Inspect samples of marked student work (the purpose of such inspection will not be to moderate internal marking but to obtain information about student learning and achievement).

• Advise on the currency of the curriculum and assist with its development.

• Submit an annual report to the University via the Quality Assurance Office on the quality of the programme and the learning experience of the students as per the template provided at http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/extexaminers/forms.html.

The report will cover the following areas:

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• The currency of the curriculum and how the curriculum may be enhanced.
• The quality of the learning opportunities provided by the programme in comparison with those provided by similar programmes at other institutions.
• The standard of student learning and achievement.
• The effectiveness of the strategy and criteria for assessment.
• Whether marking is undertaken rigorously and in accordance with assessment criteria.
• Steps which might be taken to enhance the experience of students.

The report will be copied to the relevant Partnership Development Officer, to the designated HE liaison staff within the Colleges and to the Faculties Support Office. It will also be considered by the Faculty Education Committee when considering the Annual Monitoring Report on the programme submitted by the College.

Appointment of Programme Advisers

10.2 Following the proposal of candidates by the College, the appointment of Programme Advisers will be undertaken by the Faculties and will require approval by the University’s Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education.

10.3 Programme Advisers will normally be appointed, in the first instance, for a period of four years and are eligible for reappointment at the end of the initial period of appointment if considered appropriate.

10.4 Programme Advisers are not External Examiners and may not concurrently hold appointment as an External Examiner for the same programme.

10.5 The University will be responsible for payment of fees and expenses which will only be payable following receipt of an annual report. Programme Advisers will be paid a fee for each visit to the College which will be equal to the minimum fee payable to University of Kent External Examiners.

10.6 Programme Advisers will normally be expected to make three visits per annum to the College, including attendance at the Board of Examiners’ meeting.

10.7 Where more than three visits in one year are deemed necessary, the approval of the University’s Head of Quality Assurance should be obtained and the University will not pay fees and expenses in respect of such additional visits unless approval has been obtained.

11. Role of Partnership Development Unit

The Partnership Development Officers seek to develop new, and support existing, collaborative arrangements with the Partner Colleges and provide a focus for links at strategic and operational levels. They are responsible for:

• Encouraging closer cooperation between Kent’s Schools and administrative offices and their counterparts in the Colleges.
• Providing advice and guidance for Partner College staff and students on any aspect of University practices and procedures both at induction and throughout the year.
• Facilitating and managing, where appropriate, the process of programme development and approval.
• Project managing the development of strategies and solutions to deal with issues which arise from College Partnerships, e.g. student support, curriculum development and quality assurance.
12. Role of Quality Assurance Office

The Quality Assurance Office (QAO) has responsibility for the following in relation to Partner College Administration:

- Providing copies of External Examiner reports where required.
- Receiving the Annual Report of the Academic School Liaison Officer.
- Receiving the Annual Report of the Programme Adviser.
- Approving visits of Programme Adviser to Partner College where these exceed three per year.

13. Periodic Strategic Review of Partner Colleges

13.1 Partner Colleges will be subject to periodic strategic review on a five-yearly basis.

13.2 Periodic Strategic Review is a process with external involvement which provides an opportunity for in depth scrutiny of the strategic case for a partnership and the partner’s ability to continue with the partnership prior to the renewal of the Memorandum of Agreement.

13.3 See 2.8 of Collaborative Provision Policies and Procedures Part 2 for the full details of this process.