

Partnership and Programme Development Approval Policy

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External reference points	Office for Students Conditions of Registration B1.The provider must ensure that the students registered on each higher education course receive a high-quality academic experience. QAA UK Quality Code 2024 Principle 7 - Designing, developing, approving and modifying programmes Principle 8 - Operating partnerships with other organisations		

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1. Background and Purpose

The Partnership and Programme Development Approval Policy (PPDAP) sets out the Academy's approach to establishing and developing new partnerships and/or programmes of study in line with our strategic plan, development within the HE Sector, regional and national labour needs and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). The policy links to the Risk Management Framework which includes the Risk Management Policy and the Risk Register, where issues relating to the risks associated with the growth of Academy provision through partnership development are considered. Any new partnership and programme is assessed for quality and monitored in terms of their scalability and appropriateness through due diligence and validation processes carried out on the Academy by respective partners, and by the Academy on respective partners.

2. Aim and Objectives

The aim of the Partnership and Programme Development Approval Policy (PPDAP) is to identify a method with procedures for ensuring that any new partnership or programme is vetted for academic suitability and viability.

To this end, the PPDAP has the following objectives:

- To provide the Senior Leadership Team and the Academic and Quality Board (AQB) with guidance on how to evaluate new partnerships and programmes under consideration so they are in line with the Academy's strategic plan and its learning, teaching and assessment strategy.
- To ensure that the Academy scrutinises all new academic (franchised) partnerships and programmes according to agreed criteria.
- To ensure, in accordance with OfS Condition B1.3 that:
 - a. each higher education course is up-to-date;
 - b. each higher education course provides educational challenge;
 - c. each higher education course is coherent;
 - d. each higher education course is effectively delivered; and
 - e. each higher education course, as appropriate to the subject matter of the course, requires students to develop relevant skills.
- To ensure that the Academy continues to monitor and review existing partnerships and programmes in terms of meeting their objectives and making recommendations to the AQB for the approval of any alterations, amendments or additions to existing partnerships and/or programmes.
- To set down the process for reporting on proposals to the AQB for partnership and programme development approval.
- To ensure that before any new partnership or programme is introduced at the Academy that the needs of current and future students are prioritised.

3. Application

First, a proposal for a new partnership and/or programme is made by any LCKA stakeholder. The proposal should be provided to the Head of Quality or Head of Programmes for formal submission to the Senior Leadership Team (who will do the initial due diligence regarding costing and resources) after which the proposal (if approved) can be sent with a fully costed and developed proposal to the Academic and Quality Board (for academic viability and consideration against the academic portfolio). The Academic and Quality Board approve the proposal to go forward then appoints a Partnership and Programme Approval Panel (PPAP) of experienced and qualified senior academic members of the Academy to review any new proposals for partnership or programme development. The panel should consist of a minimum of two of the following:

Executive Dean
Head of Academy Advancement and
Operations
Senior faculty members
External Advisor

The PPAP submits a report with due diligence on the prospective partner for higher education programmes to the AQB. The new partnership and/or programme must be approved by the AQB before contracts are signed and courses are delivered. The Board of Governors must be provided with a copy of the PPAP report and notified of the decision of the AQB.

4. Office for Students Conditions of Registration

In keeping with the Office for Students Condition of Registration B1.3, the Programme Approval Panel must ensure that all courses delivered at the Academy:

- Are up-to-date
- Provide educational challenge
- Are coherent
- As appropriate to the subject matter of the course, require students to develop relevant skills.

5. Framework Levels and Descriptors

A key priority of the Partnership and Programme Development Approval Policy (PPDAP) is to ensure that the curriculum design of all academic programmes at the Academy is fully aligned with the levels and qualification descriptors of the FHEQ. The Partnership and Programme Approval Panel (PPAP) provides this assurance before it recommends any new

academic programme, or changes to existing programmes of study to the AQB.

The PPAP ensures that all courses offered at the Academy are fully aligned with the FHEQ levels and qualification descriptors, including the five core characteristics of level 6 as stipulated in Annex D outcome classification descriptions as follows:

- knowledge and understanding
- cognitive skills
- practical skills
- transferable skills
- professional competences, where relevant.

6. Needs Analysis

Any partnership and/or programme development at the Academy must be based upon a needs analysis.

6.1. Needs Analysis for New Programmes

The PPAP draws from the following sources of information when researching the need for any new partnership or programme at the Academy:

- Through analysis of applicant profiles from student admissions and responses to marketing activities, the Academy is able to identify student demographics and student choice of programme. This information is used to identify appropriate locations and programmes/courses that prospective students from our target segments are interested in. Analysis of student and staff feedback on existing programmes ensures that the Academy is able to identify what future programmes would benefit communities.
- The Academy aligns its aims in terms of student recruitment and partnership development with the priorities of local enterprise strategies.
- The Academy establishes new partnerships and programmes that align with the Strategic Objectives in the Academy's Academic Development Plan.
- Suggestions from stakeholders may also enable the Academy to identify a need for a new programme.
- Consultation with employers to identify the employability competencies sought by local businesses.
- Analysis of global markets in the development of provision.
- A quintennial review of the academic portfolio that takes place prior to revising the Academy's Business Plan.

6.2. Identifying Changes to Existing Programmes

Whether any changes for existing programmes are required or not, they are informed by the findings in the Programmes Quality Review, which draws from the following sources:

- Focus Groups with Students
- Unit Reviews
- Student Surveys
- Student Performance Metrics
- Student Graduate Outcomes
- External Reports
- Risk Analysis
- Competitor Analysis
- Local Labour Market Needs (LEPs)
- Responding to External Environmental Changes (e.g. political)

6.3. Approach to Partnership Development

Partnerships are assessed by the PPAP according to key criteria. The Senior Leadership Team are encouraged to network and actively search for partnerships that would be beneficial to the Academy. The Senior Leadership Team should undertake some preliminary research before proposing a new partnership.

Prospective partners must meet the following criteria:

- Hold degree awarding powers
- Have a positive outcome of most recent QSR report
- Hold a TEF Award
- Student success results meeting and exceeding benchmarks
- Good student feedback/NSS survey
- Suitable subjects offered and mode of delivery
- No negative press on social media or any other platform
- Financially stable and has growth plans
- High ranking of partner in the HE Sector

If a prospective partner does not meet the above criteria then a clear rationale should be presented to explain why the partnership is worth pursuing.

7. Approval Procedures

The Academy has procedures for approving new programmes and new partnerships and for making any changes to existing programmes on a case-by-case basis. Checks that support the academic case for a new programme or partnership, or changes to existing programmes are carried out by the Programme Approval Panel (PPAP). When carrying out checks for due diligence the following tables are used.

7.1.New Programme Approval

Section A: Academic Criteria

No	Criteria	Comment	Source
1	The design and content of the programme are aligned to the Academy's Strategic Plan		
2	The programme draws from the Academy's existing strengths		
3	The programme can be delivered following the Academy's LTA Strategy		
4	Currency of the programme in terms of graduate employment outcomes		
5	The design and content of the programme delivers key employability competencies		
6	The appeal of the programme to the target demographic		
7	Recognition of the qualification		
8	The alignment of the programme to the educational challenge of relevant subject benchmark statements		
9	Up-to-date		
10	Provide educational challenge		
11	Coherent		
12	As appropriate to the subject matter of the course, requires students to develop relevant skills.		

7.2.Making Changes to Programmes

No	Criteria	Comment	Source
1	Recommendations for changes to the programme from students or staff		
2	Changes recommended by internal or external reviews or committees		
3	The methods of assessment of the programme are accessible to all students		
4	There are factors that require changes to the mode of delivery		
5	The content of the programme is inclusive		
6	There is opportunity for flexibility of delivery		

7.3.New Partnership Approval

Before the Academy considers any partnership proposal, the PPAP meet to complete the following checklist for due diligence purposes:

Section A: Academic Prerequisites

1. Value Added by the Partnership

No	Criteria	Comment	Source
1.1	Does the partnership align to the Academy's strategic plan?		
1.2	Is there a need for the provision in the location under consideration?		
1.3	Does it meet with local enterprise priorities?		
1.4	Does it align with the academic needs of students identified by Academy stakeholders?		
1.5	Does it provide students with opportunities of relevant employability competencies?		
1.6	Does it empower our target demographic?		

2. Expectations of Potential Partners

No	Criteria	Comment	Source
2.1	Holds degree awarding powers		
2.2	Positive outcome of most recent QAA/QSR report		
2.3	Holds a TEF Award		
2.4	Student success results meeting and exceeding benchmarks		
2.5	Student feedback/NSS survey		
2.6	Subjects offered and mode of delivery		
2.7	Negative press on social media or any other platform		
2.8	Is financially stable and has growth plans		
2.9	Ranking of partner in the HE Sector.		

Section B: Feasibility and Viability Checklist

No	Criteria	Comment	Source
1	Competitor analysis indicates there is a gap in the market		
2	The Academy can feasibly provide infrastructure and resources to effectively deliver the programme(s) under the partnership arrangements		
3	The partnership does not place the Academy at an unreasonable risk financially or otherwise		
4	The partnership does not negatively impact on existing partnerships or programmes		
5	The partnership will add value to the Academy, its students, other stakeholders and the wider community		