

## SECTION 5

# Academic Collaboration: Award-Bearing Taught Provision

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## 1. OVERVIEW

### 1.1 Introduction

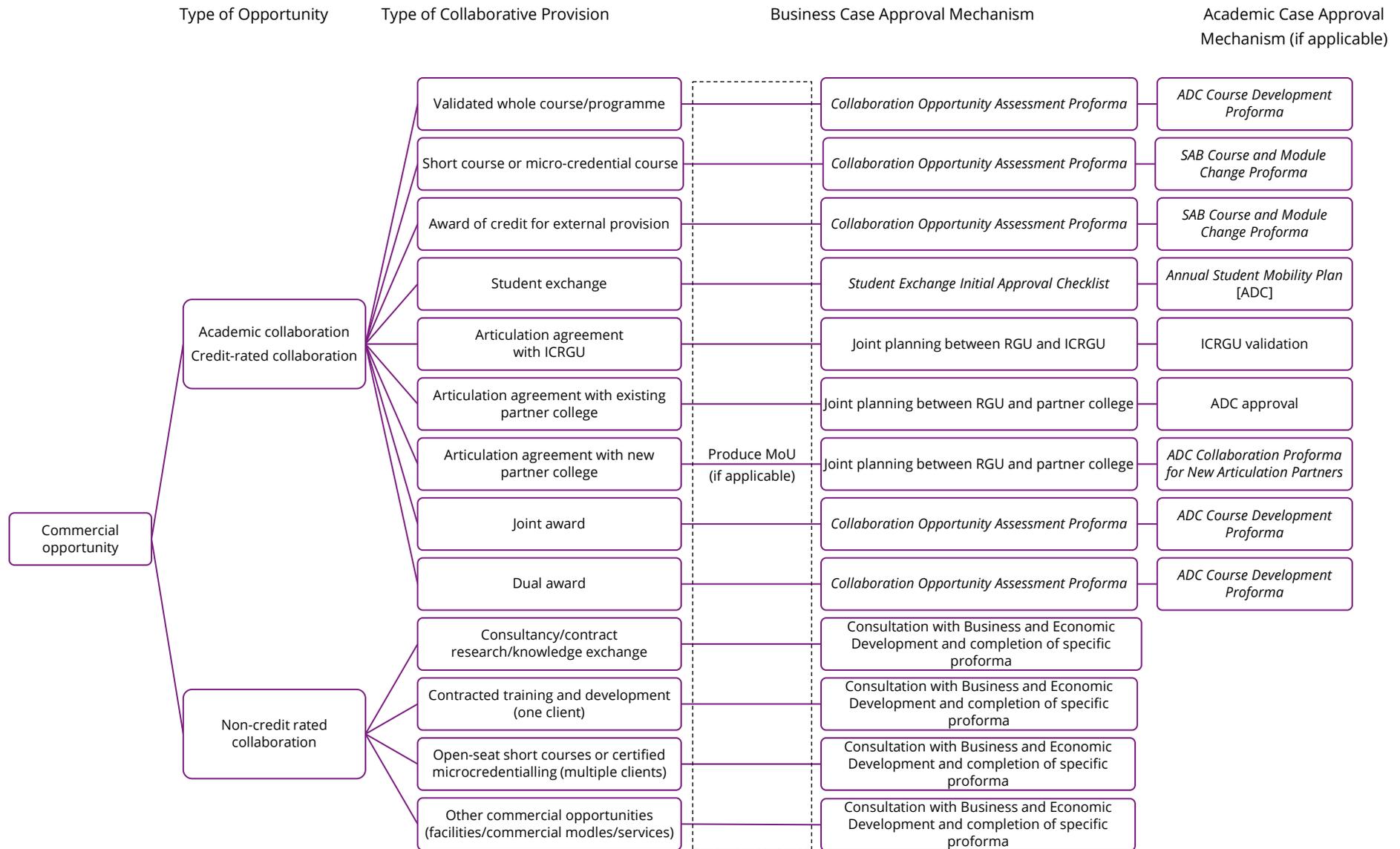
The following section covers arrangements whereby the University collaborates with a third party in the delivery of credit/award-bearing taught provision.

Arrangements for credit/award-bearing taught collaborative provision, referred to as academic collaboration, are agreed on the basis of individual courses, programmes, short courses or micro-credential courses. The Academic Development Committee (ADC) of the University has overall responsibility for approving the majority of these arrangements. The range of collaborative provision and a summary of the approval mechanisms for each one is outlined in [Flowchart 1: Commercial Opportunities Approval Summary](#) below.

In drafting this section of the Handbook, due cognisance has been taken of relevant Themes of the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#).

An academic collaboration may be a type of commercial activity. Commercial activity is where the University provides services to, or in partnership with, third parties (institutions, companies or individuals) to generate financial contribution for the University.

1.1.1 Flowchart 1: Commercial Opportunities Approval Summary



## 1.2 General Principles of Academic Collaboration

All academic collaborations are subject to approval, monitoring and review, and all academic collaborations will be formalised through a legally binding agreement. The approval of academic collaborations essentially involves two stages, initial approval of the business case and formal approval of the academic case [see [Flowchart 1: Commercial Opportunities Approval Summary](#)].

- Business case approval involves approval in principle by the Vice-Principal for Academic Development and Student Experience and the Vice-Principal for Economic Development in accordance with the [Collaboration Opportunities Process](#).
- Academic case approval is in accordance with the principles outlined in [Section 1: Module, Course and Programme Developments](#).

Monitoring and review follows the principles, and as closely as possible, the procedures used for all University courses [see [Section 2: Annual Appraisal Process](#), [Section 3: Institution-Led Subject Review](#) and [Section 4: External Examiner Arrangements](#)].

Where a decision is taken to cease an academic collaboration, cessation procedures will be in accordance with [Section 1: Module, Course and Programme Developments](#), together with formal notice to the delivery or partner institution or organisation in accordance with the terms of any contractual agreements.

Regardless of the type of collaboration, the University will retain effective control over all information, publicity, promotional activity and standards relating to programmes and awards for which it has responsibility. This will include:

- all recruitment or advertising proposed by a delivery or partner institution or organisation in advance of formal approval, which must indicate that the collaborative arrangement has still to be approved/validated;
- any material produced by a collaborating partner institution or organisation using the University's name and/or logo requires prior approval by the University.

A *Contract of Collaboration* will be produced by the University and signed by both parties before any collaborative provision can be delivered. The *Contract of Collaboration* will be produced by Business and Economic Development in liaison with the Dean of School, the Finance Department, the Academic Quality Officer and the University Solicitor. Where the Contract relates to an international exchange, this will be produced by the University Solicitor. The *Contract of Collaboration* will set out the responsibilities and duties of each partner institution or organisation, specifying *inter alia* and where applicable:

- financial arrangements;
- course entry requirements;
- approval of staff appointments;

- arrangements relating to the implementation of the University's Academic Regulations;
- External Examiner arrangements and responsibility for payment of Examiners' fees and expenses;
- arrangements for course monitoring and review;
- any issues relating to accreditation by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies;
- information to be included on student transcripts (in order to ensure full compliance with the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#)), and
- contract review date.

For overseas collaborations the University also requires the partner institution or organisation to secure written confirmation that the implementation of the course has the approval of the government or appropriate authority of the country concerned, and to confirm annually through the [Link Coordinator](#), that any changes to legislation do not affect the status of the agreement.

Normally, the University will not consider entering into collaborative arrangements where delivery and/or assessment is in a language other than English. Where exceptions to this are made, the *Contract of Collaboration* will clearly state what arrangements the University requires in order to be assured that the learning experience and achievements of students are of an appropriate standard. Associated costs, for example for translation work, would be borne by the partner institution or organisation.

### 1.3 Types of Collaboration

The University recognises the following examples of commercial opportunities:

#### **Credit-Rated Provision**

- Validated whole course/programme
- Short courses and micro-credential courses
- Award of credit for external provision
- Student exchange
- Articulation agreement with ICRGU
- Articulation agreement with existing partner college
- Articulation agreement with new partner college
- Joint award
- Dual award

#### **Non-Credit-Rated Provision**

- Consultancy/contract research/knowledge exchange
- Contracted training and development with typically one client
- Open-seat short courses or certified micro-credential courses with multiple clients
- Other commercial opportunities

The Academic Quality Handbook refers to the processes for credit-rated collaborative provision, which are defined in more detail below. For non-credit-rated proposals, please consult with [Business and Economic Development](#) directly [see [Flowchart 1: Commercial Opportunities Approval Summary](#)].

### **Validated Course**

A validated course is a whole course/programme, or part of a course/programme, designed, delivered and assessed by the staff of the partner institution or organisation and approved, quality assured and overseen by the University [see [subsection 2](#)].

### **Short Course and Micro-credential Course**

A short course or micro-credential course is typically offered as a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) module. A short course normally uses a validated 15 credit module at the appropriately defined SCQF Level. A micro-credential course is a small packet of learning and skills acquisition that may be recognised by a digital certificate or badge, however, in the context of academic collaboration, a micro-credential course normally uses a validated 5 or 10 credit module at the appropriately defined SCQF Level. They are designed, delivered and assessed by the staff of the partner institution or organisation and approved, quality assured and overseen by the University [see [subsection 3](#)].

### **Award of Credit for External Provision**

Award of credit for external provision is a form of collaboration between the University and an external provider (such as an employer, a professional body or a non-degree awarding college) which involves, initially, the University credit-rating the provider's provision and thereafter maintaining oversight of the assessment standards achieved and confirmation of the award of credit by the University [see [subsection 4](#)].

### **Student Exchange**

A student exchange opportunity is where a student enrolled on a University course undertakes a period of study outside the United Kingdom through the Turing Scheme or an international exchange at a partner institution of no more than one year which is credited as a contribution to the course award [see [subsection 5](#)].

### **Articulation Agreement**

An articulation agreement is a formal agreement entitling a student who has satisfactorily completed a specified programme at a partner institution or organisation to enter directly into a subsequent stage of a specified course at the University [see [subsection 6](#)].

### **Joint Award**

The University has the provision to collaborate with one or more partner institutions with degree-awarding powers to jointly design and/or deliver and/or assess a course/programme leading to a single award. Such joint arrangements would be subject to mutually agreed and clearly defined quality assurance processes based on those of the University and the partner institution or organisation [see [subsection 7](#)].

### **Dual Award**

A dual award is where a programme of study is provided by the University together with one or more other awarding bodies, leading to separate awards and certificates being granted by all the awarding bodies involved. Each awarding body is responsible for their own award; however, the dual award provides an integrated educational experience. If a student only meets the requirements for one of the

awarding bodies, they will only receive one award. An example of a dual award arrangement is where a student undertakes study abroad for a year as part of their University degree award and also receives an award for the year's study by the study abroad host [see [subsection 8](#)].

The University may seek to engage in collaborations customised to particular circumstances which do not fall exactly within the definitions provided above. In such cases, the general principles outlined in this section of the Academic Quality Handbook would be applied, including appropriate customisation of documents and quality assurance processes.

Whilst the processes outlined in this section of the Academic Quality Handbook relate to taught provision, there may be potential collaborations regarding research or degrees which are primarily research-based, and these collaborations must adhere to [Section 6: Research Degrees](#). In these cases, consultation with Governance and Academic Quality is required.

The following subsections provide details relating to the different types of credit-rated collaboration:

**[Subsection 2 – Validated Course](#)**

**[Subsection 3 – Short Course and Micro-credential Course](#)**

**[Subsection 4 – Award of Credit for External Provision](#)**

**[Subsection 5 – Student Exchange Study Period/Study Abroad](#)**

**[Subsection 6 – Articulation Agreement](#)**

**[Subsection 7 – Joint Award](#)**

**[Subsection 8 – Dual Award](#)**

## 1.4 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is used to confirm the University's intention and willingness to undertake a potential range of academic collaborative activity with a partner institution or organisation. An MoU can be initiated by either the University or by the potential partner. It should only be developed when, following initial discussions, there is serious intent to progress the collaboration and the collaboration will bring strategic benefits to the University.

For academic collaborations, an MoU is usually developed before the business case is put forward for approval and may not always be necessary for every proposal. As an MoU is not a legally binding document they are not always the appropriate model, therefore, due consideration of the timescales involved, benefits arising from the MoU and overall purpose of the MoU will be required. Further advice on whether an MoU is required can be sought from [legal@rgu.ac.uk](mailto:legal@rgu.ac.uk).

Before an MoU can be formally written, the case for developing an MoU must be approved through a [Memorandum of Understanding – Guidance and Initial Approval Proforma](#) to provide information on:

- the collaborating partner institution or organisation;
- details of how the contact was initiated;
- initial intentions and rationale to develop the MoU;
- relevance to, and alignment with, the University's Strategy and Values;

- potential benefits to the University;
- initial planned actions;
- any agreed delivery timescales;
- indicative longer term prospects of the collaboration;
- assessment of the financial implications.

The *MoU Initial Approval Proforma* is submitted to the Dean of School for consideration and approval before forwarding to the Legal Officer ([legal@rgu.ac.uk](mailto:legal@rgu.ac.uk)) for onwards transition to the appropriate Vice-Principal for final approval on whether the MoU can be developed.

Following approval by the appropriate Vice-Principal, the Legal Officer will advise the School that the MoU can be developed and drafted. In cases where the proposal has been initiated by the University, a specific MoU is developed based on the standard *Memorandum of Understanding Template*.

The MoU should:

- indicate the initial intent of the collaboration;
- permit further subsequent developments to be considered;
- confirm and state explicitly that all ensuing activities arising from the MoU will be subject to formal contractual agreement prior to implementation;
- specify an initial period of duration of the MoU;
- include a termination mechanism/clause.

In cases where the partner institution or organisation has provided a draft MoU for signing, this should be checked by the University Solicitor's office, and where necessary modified, to comply with the guidance provided above.

Once the MoU has been drafted, the Legal Officer will liaise with the Principal for final sign off as the signatory for the University. Once the MoU has been finalised, the business case for the collaboration can be drafted for approval.

All signed MoUs are held by the University's Solicitor's office. Details of all current MoUs are monitored by the Academic Development Committee (ADC) on an annual basis to inform institutional decisions relating to renewal and/or termination of specific MoUs. Normally an MoU would be terminated if there had been no activity after 12 months of signing.

## 2. VALIDATED COURSE

### 2.1 Initial Approval of the Business Case

Prior to the business case being developed, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) may be drafted with the partner institution or organisation to confirm the University's initial intention and willingness to undertake a potential range of academic collaborative activity [refer [section 1.4](#)].

If satisfied of the value in pursuing the collaboration, the Dean of School produces a *Collaboration Opportunity Assessment Proforma*. The Vice-Principal for Academic Development and Student Experience and the Vice-Principal for Economic Development consider the business case in accordance with the *Collaboration Opportunities Process*.

As part of this initial stage, the University would wish to have sufficient information about the partner institution or organisation, in particular, its resources, facilities, staff, traditions, ethos, academic and non-academic capability and achievements, to allow the University to satisfy itself the partner institution or organisation is fully able to meet any requirements which may be placed upon it to assure quality and standards.

The approval of the partner institution or organisation as suitable for the delivery of courses/programmes leading to awards of the University implies that the partner institution or organisation:

- has compatible and complementary strategic aims to that of the University;
- is financially stable with appropriate resources to support higher education courses/programmes;
- has an effective management system suited to assuring the quality of courses and programmes;
- offers an ethos and environment for teaching and learning appropriate to higher education; and
- has an appropriate regulatory framework and academic and administrative policies and practices, e.g. regulations governing student conduct, appeals and complaints, should be in place, as should mechanisms and resources to support staff development.

## 2.2 Formal Approval of the Academic Case

Business case approval will be followed by formal approval in line with the requirements of the University outlined in [Section 1](#) of this Handbook.

The School produces an *ADC Course Development Proposal Proforma* for approval by the Academic Development Committee. This will normally require a validation and the University's *Validation Procedure* for new courses and programmes (see [Section 1](#) of this Handbook) is used and documents prepared accordingly.

Advice on requirements for the validation is available from the Academic Quality Officers.

Documentation supplied by the University to the partner institution or organisation for a validation will include:

- Academic Quality Handbook;
- Academic Regulations;
- Organisational Regulations;

- relevant extracts from the draft *Contract of Collaboration*.

Documentation supplied by the partner institution or organisation to the University for the validation will normally include:

- course documentation required for a new course/programme validation (see [Section 1, subsection 2.3](#) of this Handbook) including details of physical resources, staff CVs, staff development plans;
- draft *Student Handbook*\*;
- copy of the equivalent regulations/quality handbook;
- Prospectus;
- Business Plan;
- background information - brief historical account of the partner institution or organisation. In the case of an overseas collaboration, assurance (in writing) that necessary permission had been obtained from local government, or agencies of the country concerned, to offer the University's course/programme(s) should be supplied.

\* The *Student Handbook* will be produced in association with the host School at the University and should follow guidance provided by the University. The Handbook should clearly detail any local arrangements relating to the implementation of the University's Academic Regulations or Procedures by the partner institution or organisation, particularly in respect of [Academic Regulation A3: Student Conduct, Appeals and Complaints](#).

Course delivery will not begin until after successful validation, which includes meeting any conditions arising from the validation outcomes. Following successful validation a *Contract of Collaboration* will be finalised and signed prior to the commencement of course delivery.

## 2.3 Monitoring and Review

Validated courses are subject to the quality assurance processes of the University and monitoring and review arrangements specific to a validated collaborative course will have been subject to approval at the validation. Ultimate responsibility for course/programme monitoring and maintaining the standard of the course/programme lies with the University.

Students on collaborative courses will have a role in course monitoring and evaluation, for example, by attending staff/student engagement/ partnership liaison meetings and completing student feedback questionnaires.

### 2.3.1 The Role of the Link Coordinator

A Link Coordinator is appointed by the University to take responsibility for the general operation, coordination and monitoring of the collaboration. If a Link Coordinator has been appointed by the

University prior to the validation of a new course, they will be present as a member of the partner institution or organisation team. The Link Coordinator:

- provides the academic link between the University and its partner;
- ensures adequate ongoing communication between the two institutions;
- acts as an advisor to the Course Leader at the partner institution or organisation on the operation and administration of the collaboration at course level;
- monitors the requirements of the Contract of Collaboration through internal School-led meetings, such as Steering Group meetings with Business and Economic Development regular catch up meetings with the partner and quality assurance visits to the partner as required, and advises the Course Leader at the partner institution or organisation in accordance with these requirements;
- ensures that the Course Leader at the partner institution or organisation is aware of sources of support and advice available at the University;
- produces a *Link Coordinator Annual Report* for the University on the operation of the collaboration, assessment and examination arrangements, which informs the *Annual Course Appraisal*;
- makes reference in the *Link Coordinator Annual Report* to issues relating to the student experience, staffing, course management and operation and assessment;
- pre-populates the *Annual Course Appraisal Report* with data from *RGU: Insight Workbooks* (see [Section 2](#)) to provide the Course Leader at the partner institution or organisation with appraisal data on which to comment;
- promotes quality enhancement to the partner institution or organisation.

### 2.3.2 Course/Programme Management

A group of staff involved with the course at the partner institution or organisation are appointed to deal with the day to day operation and monitoring of the course. (The University calls this a Course Management Team). One of the group takes overall responsibility for the course. (The University calls this a Course Leader). The University requires formal minutes to be taken of Course Management Team meetings and for these to be submitted to the host School's School Academic Board at the University.

The Course Management Team at the partner institution or organisation is responsible for:

- the delivery of the teaching programme of the course/programme in accordance with the *Course Specification*;
- the appraisal and evaluation of the course/programme, and
- the review of resources required for the operation of the course/programme.

The University will keep the partner institution or organisation informed of any changes to University Academic Regulations or procedures which would affect the operation of the collaboration.

### 2.3.3 External Examiner Arrangements

External Examiners are approved by the University's Academic Council. The primary responsibility of the External Examiner is to ensure that candidates are assessed fairly and impartially, and that the standard of the award is comparable with those of other awarding bodies. The duties of an External Examiner are detailed in [Academic Regulation A5: External Examiners](#). Refer also to [Section 4](#) of this Handbook.

The University briefs all External Examiners involved in the collaboration on their duties and new External Examiners are invited to attend an induction.

### 2.3.4 Annual Course Appraisal

The Course Leader at the partner institution or organisation must produce an *Annual Course Appraisal Report*. This *Report* will provide a concise overview of the course operation using the proforma and guidance in [Section 2](#) of this Handbook.

The Course Management Team of the partner institution or organisation is responsible for responding to comments raised by the External Examiner(s) in the *External Examiner Annual Report*. A copy of this response will be considered for approval by the University's School Academic Board as part of the Annual Appraisal process.

### 2.3.5 Periodic Review

Validated courses are subject to periodic review. In the majority of cases, these are considered during the course re-approval activities of the host School as part of Institution-Led Subject Review (ILSR). Review of any arrangements associated with collaboration will be included in the ILSR process, as part of the relevant course re-approval (refer to [Section 3](#) of this Handbook.) In accordance with the processes outlined in [Section 3](#) of this Handbook, the Academic Quality Officer is responsible for providing a summary of issues from past quality assurance processes and this will include specific reference to collaborative arrangements.

Notwithstanding the intention to review collaborative arrangements as part of normal review processes, the University reserves the right to conduct a discrete review at the partner institution or organisation at any time during the operation of the collaboration. The partner institution or organisation would be given formal notification of the date of such a review, normally at least four months in advance.

### 2.3.6 Contract Monitoring and Compliance

Monitoring and compliance with contractual obligations is led by Business and Economic Development (BAED); this Department provides the Dean of School and Course Leader with a summary of final obligations applicable to the academic requirements drawn from the contract. It is the Dean of School's responsibility to advise BAED at the earliest opportunity if there is any risk that these terms might not be achieved. In the event that a risk is identified, BAED will process and escalate as necessary and,

while liaising with the School, take steps to rectify, discuss or re-negotiate the contract. BAED will review the contract as required in liaison with the School and progress is monitored internally to ensure both partners are meeting their contractual obligations.

### 3. SHORT COURSE AND MICRO-CREDENTIAL COURSE

#### 3.1 Initial Approval of the Business Case

Prior to the business case being developed, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) may be drafted with the partner institution or organisation to confirm the University's initial intention and willingness to undertake a potential range of academic collaborative activity [refer [section 1.4](#)].

If satisfied of the value in pursuing the collaboration, the Dean of School produces a *Collaboration Opportunity Assessment Proforma*. The Vice-Principal for Academic Development and Student Experience and the Vice-Principal for Economic Development consider the business case in accordance with the *Collaboration Opportunities Process*.

#### 3.2 Formal Approval of the Academic Case

Following initial approval, the School produces a *SAB Course and Module Change Proforma*. The School Academic Board considers the academic case in accordance with Section 1: *Module, Course and Programme Developments*.

The formal approval has two stages:

- the credit-rating of the external provision, which is undertaken in line with Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework guidance for credit-rating, includes producing one or more *Module Descriptors* in the University's *Module Database*;
- the approval of the *Module Descriptor(s)* by the appropriate School Academic Board which will include consideration of how oversight of assessment is managed, including Assessment Board arrangements.

A *Contract of Collaboration* will be produced by the University and signed by both parties before the provision can be delivered.

#### 3.3 Monitoring and Review

The University will appoint a Link Coordinator to take responsibility for the general operation, coordination and monitoring of the collaboration and to provide the academic link between the University and its partner to ensure adequate ongoing communication between the two partners. The Link Coordinator produces a *Link Coordinator Annual Report* for the University on the operation of the

collaboration, assessment and examination arrangements, which informs the *Annual Course/Programme Appraisal*. Assisted by the Link Coordinator, the person responsible for the delivery at the partner institution or organisation (the “Course Leader”) will produce an *Annual Course Appraisal Report* using the proforma and guidance in [Section 2](#) of this Handbook.

Credit-rated external provision is subject to review as part of the University’s Institution-Led Subject Review process outlined in [Section 3](#) of this Handbook.

The University will assure itself of output standards through its involvement with the assessment process. This will include the appointment of External Examiners to oversee the award of credit [Refer also to [Section 4](#) of this Handbook and [Academic Regulation A5: External Examiners](#).]

Monitoring and review of contractual obligations will follow the same procedure as for validated courses [refer section 2.3.6].

## 4. AWARD OF CREDIT FOR EXTERNAL PROVISION

### 4.1 Initial Approval of the Business Case

Prior to the business case being developed, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) may be drafted with the partner institution or organisation to confirm the University’s initial intention and willingness to undertake a potential range of academic collaborative activity [refer [section 1.4](#)].

If satisfied of the value in pursuing the collaboration, the Dean of School produces a *Collaboration Opportunity Assessment Proforma*. The Vice-Principal for Academic Development and Student Experience and the Vice-Principal for Economic Development consider the business case in accordance with the *Collaboration Opportunities Process*.

### 4.2 Formal Approval of the Academic Case

Following initial approval, the School produces a *SAB Course and Module Change Proforma*. The School Academic Board considers the academic case in accordance with Section 1: *Module, Course and Programme Developments*.

The formal approval has two stages:

- the credit-rating of the external provision, which is undertaken in line with Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework guidance for credit-rating, includes producing one or more *Module Descriptors* in the University’s *Module Database*;
- the approval of the *Module Descriptor(s)* by the appropriate School Academic Board which will include consideration of how oversight of assessment is managed, including Assessment Board arrangements.

A *Contract of Collaboration* will be produced by the University and signed by both parties before the provision can be delivered.

### 4.3 Monitoring and Review

The University will appoint a Link Coordinator to take responsibility for the, general operation, coordination and monitoring of the collaboration and to provide the academic link between the University and its partner to ensure adequate ongoing communication between the two institutions. The Link Coordinator produces a *Link Coordinator's Annual Report* for the University on the operation of the collaboration, assessment and examination arrangements, which informs the *Annual Course/Programme Appraisal*. Assisted by the Link Coordinator, the person responsible for the delivery at the partner institution or organisation (the "Course Leader") will produce an *Annual Course Appraisal Report* using the proforma and guidance in [Section 2](#) of this Handbook.

Credit-rated external provision is subject to review as part of the University's Institution-Led Subject Review process outlined in [Section 3](#) of this Handbook.

The University will assure itself of output standards through its involvement with the assessment process. This will include the appointment of External Examiners to oversee the award of credit [Refer also to [Section 4](#) of this Handbook and [Academic Regulation A5: External Examiners](#).]

Monitoring and review of contractual obligations will follow the same procedure as for validated courses.

## 5. STUDENT EXCHANGE

### 5.1 Initial Approval of the Business Case

A student exchange opportunity can be facilitated for University students (the home institution) to study at partner universities (the host institution) through:

- the Turing Scheme at worldwide participating institutions;
- an international exchange at overseas institutions not covered by the Turing Scheme.

In all cases the International Exchanges Manager will have oversight of student exchange arrangements and the School concerned will have close and early liaison with the International Exchanges Manager in consideration of the business case for any proposals for new student exchange opportunities.

For **new student exchange opportunities**, prior to submitting the proposal for approval, a number of checks are required through completion of the [Student Exchange Initial Approval Checklist](#), including checking the suitability of:

- the academic content of the partner institution's curriculum;
- the system for quality assurance in operation at the partner institution;
- the pastoral support offered to students by the partner institution.

For **existing student exchanges**, if a different subject area or different campus is being proposed with an existing partner institution, an additional [Student Exchange Initial Approval Checklist](#) is required.

All exchange students are expected to accumulate credit only, which will contribute to the award of the home institution. Exceptionally, and where agreed and documented in the Exchange Agreement, a student accumulating sufficient credit for an RGU award will be considered for the appropriate award.

Where a School identifies an opportunity for the School's own students to receive an award from a host institution or to make an award reciprocally as part of an Exchange Agreement, this requires approval by the Academic Development Committee (ADC) using the *ADC Course Change Proforma*.

## 5.2 Formal Approval of the Academic Case

If the Dean of School approves the *Student Exchange Initial Approval Checklist* as providing satisfactory evidence of the business case a proposal is made for consideration by ADC through an annual plan submitted to ADC for approval in respect of any type of student exchange.

Following approval by ADC, an appropriate form of contract is prepared. For student exchange, this is facilitated by the International Exchanges Manager, in liaison with the University Solicitor where relevant. Contracts will specify the responsibilities of the partner institution and the student, and arrangements for any awards. Students will not be permitted to undertake a student exchange study period with a partner institution unless the University has a formal agreement with that institution. This applies irrespective of whether the University or another institution initiates the establishment of an Exchange Agreement. Dual awards that are associated with a student exchange are approved by ADC and contracted separately by the relevant School in liaison with the University Solicitor and the International Exchanges Manager [refer [section 8](#)].

## 5.3 Monitoring and Review

The University will satisfy itself, on an ongoing basis, that the administration, general operation and monitoring of the student exchange arrangement continues to meet its requirements. A School Exchange Coordinator will be appointed to assist in this respect but overall responsibility for the quality of the student exchange lies with the Dean of School.

A [Student Exchange Partner Institution – Annual Check](#) is required on an annual basis to monitor each student exchange. The International Exchanges Manager has responsibility for centrally coordinating the Annual Checks by contacting each partner institution to collate the information required. Annual Checks are required to be submitted for approval to the Dean of School in July in order for them to be

considered as part of the Annual Appraisal Process (refer Section 2 of this Handbook) and to capture feedback from outgoing students whose student exchange study period finishes in May/June.

The International Exchanges Manager is responsible for completing pastoral information in the Annual Check and the School Exchange Coordinator(s) are responsible for completing the academic information of the Annual Check, confirming that the student exchange continues to:

- provide the necessary underpinning for the student to progress to the next stage of the University's course/programme on their return;
- comply with the relevant learning outcomes for that stage of the course/programme; and
- comply with professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements, if appropriate.

In addition to this, Deans of School are expected to monitor student exchange arrangements on an ongoing basis and handle any escalated concerns from either the International Exchanges Manager or School Exchange Coordinator throughout the year.

The School Exchange Coordinator, in consultation with Course Leaders where relevant, and overseen by the Dean of School, will:

- (i) complete the *Student Exchange Partner Institution – Annual Check* in conjunction with the International Exchanges Manager, and provide any additional information required for the home course/programme's Annual Appraisal Process;
- (ii) request and consider formal written student feedback on the student exchange study period;
- (iii) ensure the University's External Examiner(s) receives all information deemed appropriate concerning the student exchange;
- (iv) take all reasonable steps to ensure the ongoing suitability of the communication links between the University and the partner institution;
- (v) take all reasonable steps to ensure the ongoing standard of performance of exchange students studying at the partner institution.

As part of the University's commitment to offer student exchanges the International Exchanges Manager will:

- (i) maintain an accurate and detailed database of Exchange Agreements;
- (ii) provide updates to the Deans of School highlighting any areas of concern;
- (iii) ensure partner institutions continue to meet their contractual obligations outlined in the Exchange Agreement;

- (iv) ensure the Schools involved in student exchanges continue to meet their obligations as specified above;
- (v) provide an Annual Report on student exchanges agreements to ADC.

Providing the Annual Check is satisfactory, confirmed through Annual Course Appraisal activity, the requirement for a visit to a partner institution would be considered as part of Institution-Led Subject Review when all relevant exchange period activity would be considered. Notwithstanding the intention to review student exchange arrangements as part of normal review processes, the University reserves the right to conduct a discrete review at the partner institution at any time during the operation of the collaboration.

## 6. ARTICULATION AGREEMENT

### 6.1 Initial Approval of the Business Case

Prior to the business case being developed, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) may be drafted with the partner institution or organisation to confirm the University's initial intention and willingness to undertake a potential range of academic collaborative activity [refer [section 1.4](#)].

The initial approval required will depend on the nature of the partnership concerned.

For the International College at Robert Gordon University (ICRGU) and partner Scottish Colleges of Further Education, developments are based on prior agreement through joint planning. Articulation arrangements with these partners will proceed straight to formal approval. ADC retains oversight of these arrangements via reports on articulation activity.

For developments with new or existing partners, approval to proceed will be required from ADC following initial joint planning between the University and the partner. If any new partner is based overseas, Business and Economic Development must be consulted.

### 6.2 Formal Approval of the Academic Case

The formal approval of pathways with the ICRGU will be undertaken by a Panel convened by the University in accordance with the validation process outlined in Section 1: [Module, Course and Programme Developments](#).

The formal approval of articulation arrangements with existing Scottish educational institutions will be overseen by ADC.

The formal approval process for all new partners, either UK or overseas, requires a proposal to ADC through completion of an *ADC Collaboration Proposal Proforma for New Articulation Partners*.

As a minimum, all articulation arrangements will involve the undertaking of a course mapping process; the production of a *Course Level Agreement* which will be signed prior to the enrolment of students, and the establishment of arrangements to oversee the *Course Level Agreement*. The *Course Level Agreement* will stipulate the eligibility requirements for students on the stated course at the partner institution to apply for entry with advanced standing to the named degree course offered by the University.

### 6.3 Monitoring and Review

All courses and programmes are appraised annually (see [Section 2](#) of this Handbook) including those with articulation routes. The performance of articulating students is considered as part of this appraisal.

The monitoring of articulation arrangements with ICRGU will be overseen by the Academic Advisory Committee which is a joint University and ICRGU committee convened by the University's Vice-Principal for Academic Development and Student Experience.

As part of the monitoring process of articulation arrangements with partner Scottish Colleges of Further Education annual status reports will be submitted to ADC. In addition, there is an expectation that meetings with partners will take place, as a minimum, annually. These meetings will include academic contacts from the relevant subject areas within each partner institution and a member of staff from DELTA. Discussions will consider key issues such as student achievement and satisfaction, as well as whether the terms and conditions of the *Course Level Agreement* continue to be met.

Monitoring of other arrangements will be confirmed on a case by case basis based on existing principles and processes.

Articulation arrangements are subject to review as part of the University's Institution-Led Subject Review process, including course re-approval where appropriate (outlined in [Section 3](#) of this Handbook).

## 7. JOINT AWARD

### 7.1 Initial Approval of Business Case

Prior to the business case being developed, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) may be drafted with the partner institution or organisation to confirm the University's initial intention and willingness to undertake a potential range of academic collaborative activity [refer [section 1.4](#)].

If satisfied of the value in pursuing the collaboration, the Dean of School produces a *Collaboration Opportunity Assessment Proforma*. The Vice-Principal for Academic Development and Student Experience and the Vice-Principal for Economic Development consider the business case in accordance with the *Collaboration Opportunities Process*.

## 7.2 Formal Approval of Academic Case

Formal approval will depend on the exact nature of the proposal. The principles for formal approval of academic provision outlined in [Section 1](#) of this Handbook will apply. A *Contract of Collaboration* will be produced by the University and signed by both parties before any collaborative provision can be delivered.

## 7.3 Monitoring and Review

Joint arrangements will be subject to mutually agreed and clearly defined quality assurance processes based on those of the University and the partner institution [refer to [Section 2](#) and [Section 3](#) of this Handbook.]

# 8. DUAL AWARD

## 8.1 Initial Approval of the Business Case

Prior to the business case being developed, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) may be drafted with the partner institution or organisation to confirm the University's initial intention and willingness to undertake a potential range of academic collaborative activity [refer [section 1.4](#)].

If satisfied of the value in pursuing the collaboration, the Dean of School produces a *Collaboration Opportunity Assessment Proforma*. The Vice-Principal for Academic Development and Student Experience and the Vice-Principal for Economic Development consider the business case in accordance with the *Collaboration Opportunities Process*.

## 8.2 Formal Approval of the Academic Case

Formal approval will depend on the exact nature of the proposal. The principles for formal approval of academic provision outlined in [Section 1](#) of this Handbook will apply. A *Contract of Collaboration* will be produced by the University and signed by both parties outlining the operational management of the arrangement.

## 8.3 Monitoring and Review

Dual awards will be subject to mutually agreed and clearly defined quality assurance processes based on those of the University and the partner institution [refer to [Section 2](#) and [Section 3](#) of this Handbook]. Specific dual awards may be unique and different from other awards which come into the category of a dual award; therefore, Schools will be required to work closely with the Department for Governance and Academic Quality to ensure compliance with sector expectations.