

Appendix 1: Guide to the Due Diligence processes for Collaborative Provision

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1. Overview

- The University adopts a proportionate, risk based approach to the due diligence in relation to Collaborative Partnerships.
- This Guide outlines the due diligence undertaken in respect of Collaborative Provision in Categories A-F.

1.1 Table showing lead responsibility for managing due diligence for Collaborative Provision by category

Category		Sub-category		Lead Responsibility
A	Placements and exchanges	A1	School-based training, clinical and other placements.	Faculty
		A2	Overseas student exchanges	Faculty
		A3	ERASMUS (also known as Erasmus+)	International Office
B	Outreach Learning Venues	B1	Outreach Learning Venues (UK)	Faculty
		B2	SCITTs	
		B3	Outreach Learning Venues (Overseas)	
C	Outreach Supported Learning Centres	C1	Outreach Supported Learning Centres: Education providers (UK)	Legal & Governance Services
		C2	Outreach Supported Learning Centres: Non-education providers (UK)	
		C3	Outreach Supported Learning Centres: overseas	
D	Credit-rating	D1	Credit-rating	Legal & Governance Services
E	Articulation agreements	E1	Articulation agreements	Legal & Governance Services
F	Delivery with a third party	F1	Franchised (single modules)	Legal & Governance Services
		F2	Co-delivery	
		F3	Franchised (whole programmes)	
		F4	Validated provision	
		F5	Joint awards	
School Direct				Legal & Governance Services

1.2 Due Diligence by Category

1.2.1 Category A: Placements and Exchanges approval

- For Category A1-A2, the following due diligence checks are normally undertaken:
 - Health & Safety audit for placements (*see section 1.4 and annex 6*);
 - Assessment of the suitability of the placement and the work to be undertaken and/or of the location for study abroad.
- For Category A3 (Erasmus), the University adheres to the Erasmus process. In order for an Institution to be granted the ERASMUS charter, they need to progress through the ERASMUS due diligence processes included in the Application for Charter submission. These due diligence procedures are thorough and Edge Hill accepts the conclusion of ERASMUS in respect of the Institutions which are granted charter status.
- The International Office, prior to students taking part in the ERASMUS scheme, undertakes a review of all students and their chosen Institution to ensure that whilst part of the scheme, their needs will be met. This is approved by the relevant Dean of Faculty.
- ERASMUS partnerships are approved via a proposal and approval process taking into account student support and academic alignment issues; supplementing the standard due diligence required by the EU before grant of an ERASMUS Charter allowing institutions and organisations to participate in the scheme.

1.2.2 Category B: Learning Venues approval

- For Category B provision, the following due diligence checks are normally undertaken:
 - Health & Safety audit (*see section 1.2.2.1*);
 - Suitability of the venue for the delivery of Edge Hill awards or credits;
 - Country intelligence (for Category B3) (*see section 1.2.3.3*).
- In addition, a **Business case** will normally be required for all proposals in Category B and will be considered by APC as part of its deliberations as to whether a venue should be approved.

1.2.2.1 Health and Safety

- In undertaking a Health and Safety audit in respect of proposed Collaborative Partners, the University takes account of the type of partner and the Health and Safety processes in place within the organisation.
- As appropriate these will be used to support and/or replace completion of the Health and Safety audit.

1.2.3 Category: C-F Approval

- The University undertakes a number of checks as part of the due diligence processes and these checks are undertaken in two stages.

1.2.3.1 Table showing Due Diligence by category

- The following grid details the due diligence normally undertaken as part of the Due Diligence Processes and the Business Approval process for new Collaborative partners. Following the risk based approach, this may be amended as appropriate to take account of the nature of the partnership or the type of partner.

Note: * This is undertaken as part of Delivery approval for Category F proposals.

Category		Sub-category		Health & Safety	Suitability of venue	Legal	Financial	Country intelligence (for overseas)	Reputational	Exit Strategy	Business case	Access to learning resources	PAD	
C	Outreach Supported Learning Centres	C1	Outreach Supported Learning Centres: Education providers (UK)	X	✓	✓	✓	n/a	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
		C2	Outreach Supported Learning Centres: Non-education providers (UK)	X	✓	✓	✓	n/a	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		C3	Outreach Supported Learning Centres: overseas	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
D	Credit-rating	D1	Credit-rating	X	X	✓	✓	n/a	✓	n/a	✓	n/a	n/a	
E	Articulation agreements	E1	Articulation agreements	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	n/a	✓	n/a	n/a	
F	Delivery with a third party	F1	Franchised (single modules)	X	✓*	✓	✓	n/a	✓	✓	✓	✓*	✓	
		F2	Co-delivery	X	✓*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓*	✓	
		F3	Franchised (whole programmes)	X	✓*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓*	✓
		F4	Validated provision	X	✓*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓*	✓
		F5	Joint awards	X	✓*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓*	✓
School Direct				X	✓	✓	✓	n/a	✓	✓	✓	✓*	✓	

1.2.4 Stage 1 Due Diligence

- Stage 1 Due Diligence comprises of initial (informal) due diligence to inform the completion of the CPP form and decision of the Faculty and APC to recommend to progress the proposed partnership for consideration through formal Business and Academic approval procedures. This includes consideration of the following:
 - Country intelligence for overseas proposals (*see section 1.4.2.1*);
 - Reputation of the proposed partner;
 - Review of the legal and financial history of the proposed partner.
- This should be undertaken for all Category C-F proposals.
- See Annex 1 for further details of the type of information that should be obtained as part of this stage of the due diligence process. Note: that it may not be possible/feasible to obtain all of this information as part of this stage of the due diligence process.
- Following completion of the due diligence, a judgement is reached in relation to the information obtained as follows:

<input type="checkbox"/>	No concerns identified
<input type="checkbox"/>	Proceed with Caution
<input type="checkbox"/>	Major concerns identified

- If major concerns are identified, the proposal is unlikely to progress any further.

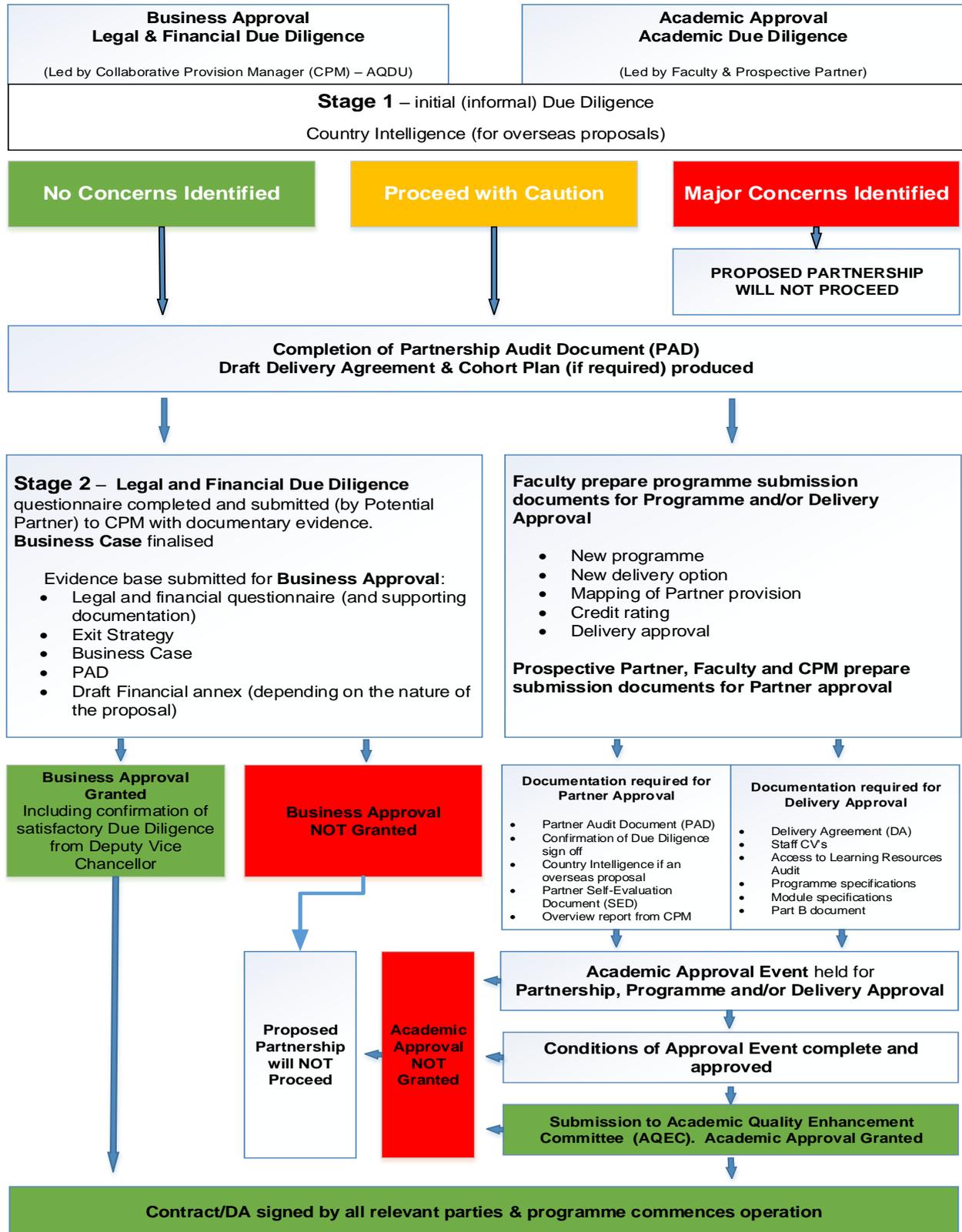
1.2.4.1 Country Intelligence report

- In respect of overseas proposals in Categories B-F, a Country Intelligence Report is produced by the International Office.
- This report provides details on the following:
 - the educational system in that country;
 - any Foreign and Commonwealth Office intelligence on the country/region;
 - its structure and regulation;
 - any relevant data on the partner from NARIC; and a
 - comparative analysis of the proposed partner against expected norms.
- This report provides background information on the proposed partner and the educational system in the relevant country and helps to inform both the business and academic approval processes.

1.2.5 Stage 2 Due Diligence

- Stage 2 Due Diligence comprises of the full and formal academic, legal and financial due diligence to inform the University decision to grant approval to the proposed partnership.
- **Legal and financial due diligence** is considered through the **Business Approval** process.
- **Academic due diligence** is considered by VASC Standing Panel through the **Academic Approval** process (*i.e. partner and delivery approval*).

1.2.6 Flowchart showing the Due Diligence Process for the approval of new Collaborative Partners



1.2.7 Academic Due Diligence (through Academic Approval Process)

- Academic due diligence is undertaken through the Partner, Programme and Delivery approval process.
- These processes are detailed in Appendix 2: Guide to the Approval and Re-approval of Collaborative Partnerships.
- As part of Academic Approval, the Partner Audit, Learning and IT Resources audit and Staffing will be considered. For further details see sections 1.2.7.1-2.

1.2.7.1 Staffing proforma (Category F only)

- The staffing proforma is an opportunity for the proposing department to review the current staffing for any partner who will be delivering a University award and will identify where staffing is already in place and identify any areas of deficit and provide a plan to address these areas.
- The document does not require staff to be in place at the time of completion, however all staff delivering an Edge Hill award would need to be approved to do so prior to the commencement of delivery.
- The document requires the team to carefully consider the requirements for all modules to be delivered and must be completed by level so that the differential requirements for the delivery of levels 5, 6 and 7 are addressed. Proposing teams should be in a position to defend their staffing proposals at academic approval.
- Following the academic approval, approved staff will be automatically entered onto the Registered Tutor Scheme.

1.2.7.2 Learning and IT Resources Audit (Category C and F only)

- For all Category C and F partnerships a Learning and IT Resources proforma must be completed. This gives details of the physical resources required to deliver the programme and identifies how these will be provided and any gaps in provision which will need to be addressed prior to the commencement of delivery of the programme.
- It is important that the locus of responsibility for the provision of any learning resource – text/software/journals is clearly identified so that the University can assure itself that this has been discussed and that each partner is aware of their responsibility. Where specialist resources are available at the partner site, a full business case for the provision of equivalent resources at Edge Hill is also required as part of the exit strategy and should be completed prior to completion of the business approval process.

1.2.7.3 Partner Audit (PAD)

- A partner audit is undertaken in respect of all new partners in categories C and F using the Partner Audit Document (PAD).
- The Partner Audit considers the following:
 - Evidence of the partner's higher education strategy, policy and processes and systems for HE curriculum development, approval and delivery.
 - (*For overseas proposals*) In-country intelligence on the educational system, its structure and regulation and comparative analysis of the proposed partner against expected norms.
 - Policies and procedures that relate to student support, admissions, enrolment and induction in the partner organisation (sufficient to ensure that students on HE programmes have comparable rights and responsibilities to their peers at the University).
 - Information about the proposed systems for administering and managing the partnership and individual and shared responsibilities of key post holders in the partner organisation and the University for:

- Student recruitment, admissions, enrolment and induction;
- Student support and guidance;
- Learning resources and learner support.
- The partner's strategy for ensuring inclusion and accessibility.
- Information relating to the partner's learning environment including central learning resources, sufficient to ensure that students undertaking HE programmes have a comparable learning experience with their peers at the University.
- The responsibilities that will be devolved to the partner organisation's services, and those to be shared with the University.
- The entitlement of students in the partner organisation to access the University's facilities and support services, etc.
- Identification of the partner's (and the University's) support for staff development to support the delivery of HE provision including opportunities for scholarly activity, professional updating and (where appropriate) academic research.
- Information relating to the quality assurance systems of the partner organisation including periodic monitoring, assessment and moderation, collection and evaluation of student feedback and the interface between these systems and those of the University in relation to the delivery of HE provision; results of internal student satisfaction surveys and external inspections and reviews, e.g. Ofsted and QAA.

1.2.8 Legal and financial due diligence (through Business Approval process)

- The following are considered as part of the Business Approval Process:
 - Legal and financial due diligence questionnaire;
 - Business case and overview
 - Exit strategy
 - Financial annex

Learning and IT Resources Audit (and any outcomes that might impact on the business case)

1.2.8.1 Legal and financial due diligence (normally Category C, D, F and School Direct only)

- Prospective partners are required to complete the Stage 2 Legal and Financial Due Diligence questionnaire and provide any relevant documentation in support of that questionnaire.

1.2.8.2 Business Case and overview

- The Business Case will be considered by Academic Planning Committee (APC) as part of its deliberations as to whether a proposal should be approved to proceed to partnership approval and by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor as part of the Business approval process when considering and approving the financial and legal due diligence.
- Further guidance on Business Cases is detailed in the 'Guide to the Production of a Business Case for Collaborative Partnerships', which is available on the University WIKI.

1.2.8.3 Draft financial annex (normally Category C, D, F and School Direct only)

- Depending on the nature of the proposal, the draft financial annex may be submitted as part of the Business approval.

1.2.8.4 Exit Strategy (Category C, F and School Direct only)

- An Exit Strategy is required for all category C and F Collaborative Partnership proposals and is considered as part of the Business approval process.
- The Exit Strategy should provide a detailed costing in the event that the University is required to take over delivery of the programme to enable all students to complete their award if a partnership ended.

1.3 Category C-F and School Direct: Monitoring of approved partners

1.3.1 Risk Register

- On an annual basis, the University produces a 'risk register' of all approved collaborative partners in categories C-F. As part of the production of that risk register, all partnerships are reviewed and assigned a risk category as follows:

LOW
MEDIUM
HIGH

- The risk category assigned, will be determined as a result of:
 - the nature of the partnership,
 - the category of partnership (i.e. C, D, E, F),
 - the type of partner (i.e. public or private sector);
 - the location of the partner (i.e. UK or Overseas); and
 - any relevant history to the partnership (i.e. conditions at approval, concerns identified through due diligence or annual monitoring).
- A justification for the risk category assigned will be given, along with details of what additional monitoring may be put in place for partnerships assigned to a MEDIUM or HIGH risk.
- The risk register is considered annually by APC as part of the Collaborative Provision Annual Plan.
- Monitoring for partnerships identified as LOW risk will be subject to standard University monitoring procedures.

1.3.2 Standard university monitoring process

- All Collaborative Partnerships are subject to standard university monitoring processes. This comprises of the following:
 - Annual Monitoring and Review (see Appendix 3: Guide to the Annual Monitoring of Collaborative Provision);
 - Through the review of any information available in respect of the partner institution, such as QAA reports, OFSTED, CQC and UKVI HTS status where partner institutions are sponsoring students on tier 4 visas;
 - Annual light touch Learning Services Audit for all category C and F provision.

1.3.3 Additional monitoring for medium or high risk partnerships

- Additional monitoring which may be put in place for partnerships assigned a MEDIUM or HIGH risk category will be determined on a case-by-case basis to reflect the risk identified and may include annual 'mid-term' due diligence (see section 3.5.4).

1.3.4 Mid-term due diligence

- All partners in categories C and F are subject to mid-term due diligence, mid-way through the five year approval period. This includes on-going financial, legal and reputational due diligence.
- For UK Publicly funded providers, the mid-term due diligence post approval will be conducted as appropriate using information which is publicly available. Where partners have UKVI HTS and are sponsoring students on Tier 4 visas, this will be monitored in the same way as UK Private Providers.

1.3.5 Interim Review (Category C and F provision only)

- If a partnership does not recruit its first cohort within 2 years of the original approval for commencement of delivery of the programme, should it wish to commence delivery, will be subject to a formal review which will include consideration of the following:
 - The Delivery Agreement/ and the staffing/support/resources/facilities at the partner to see if any changes since approval that may affect the delivery of the programme;
 - Any changes/amendments/curriculum issues in relation to the programme in case this has any effect on the approval granted;
 - Review of the due diligence.
- The review would not have the effect of extending the life of the partnership but would enable the Faculty, in conjunction with the Collaborative Provision Manager to review the provision and provide reassurance to AQEC that everything remains in order or make any recommendations for follow-up before delivery commences.
- Following consideration by the Faculty, a report outlining the findings of the review, with any recommendations for follow-up action should be submitted to AQEC for approval.

1.4 Category C-F: Addition of new provision at an existing partner

- The Business approval process for the addition of new provision to an existing partner institution will focus on the specific programme to be approved. the following documentation will be produced for approval:
 - Business Case and overview;
 - Exit Strategy;
 - Draft Financial Annex (depending on the nature of the proposal).
 - Access to Learning Resources Audit (note: for Category F provision this will be considered as part of Academic Approval).

1.5 Category C-F: Re-approval of existing partners

- Depending on the nature of the partnership and the type of partner (i.e. UK or overseas, publically funded or private organisation) and the assessment of risk, this may be either through completion of the Stage 2 Due diligence questionnaire or the Mid-term due diligence questionnaire and will include the following evidence base:
 - Legal and financial questionnaire (and supporting documentation);
 - Exit Strategy;
 - Business Case and overview;
 - Re-approval PAD
 - Draft Financial Annex (depending on the nature of the proposal).
- This will be considered following the same process as Partner Approval.