

Edge Hill University

COLLABORATIVE PROVISION STRATEGY

2014-2019

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Definition of Collaborative Provision

The University's definition of Collaborative Provision includes any credit-bearing module or programme for which it holds ultimate responsibility but which is delivered, in whole or in part, by or with another organisation. This extends to agreements with other awarding bodies for the validation of Dual degrees or the recognition of qualifications that enable holders to gain advanced entry to an Edge Hill programme (a process known as 'articulation').

The University's definition of Collaborative Provision also extends further to the provision of student work placements and Study Abroad opportunities – however, these are addressed separately from the current Strategy which deals mainly with the development of outreach, validation and franchise arrangements as well as opportunities for the accreditation of employer-based training.

Introduction

This Strategy has been developed to help support the achievement of the University's Strategic Goals as set out in the University Strategic Plan 2013-2020.

The University's Vision in its Strategic Plan is that Edge Hill University will:

- **Establish both national and international partnerships, which will enrich university life, deepen our understanding of the world, and benefit the region and, more broadly, the UK economy**

The Collaborative Provision Strategy has been built to align, co-ordinate and ensure the effective deployment of resources to support the collaborative aspects of the University's Strategic Plan and the collaborative aspects of the following key strategies, which align to the Strategic Plan:

- International Recruitment Strategy;
- Learning and Teaching Strategy;
- Enterprise Strategy.

Collaborative Provision through national and international partnerships is an important element of the University's portfolio. It offers opportunities for the University to support a wide range of learners in a variety of contexts through partnership working. In particular it supports our objectives in extending and strengthening external partnerships, international engagement, and the development of employer engagement. It also provides a means to cultivate an international profile through the establishment of links with individual institutions overseas. Using a risk-based approach, the University seeks to diversify its student base and contribute to institutional growth through the careful consolidation of its partnerships locally and regionally, and expansion of its partnerships regionally, nationally and internationally. All proposals for Collaborative Partnerships will be considered individually, on a case-by-case basis.

This Strategy sets out the University's Collaborative Provision aims for the next five years and reflects the updated UK Quality Code for Higher Education and specifically, Chapter B10: Managing Higher Education Provision with Others. It outlines the type and extent of partnerships that Edge Hill University expects to develop over the next five years, as well as the management structures that will sustain these and manage the associated risks. It includes a rationale both for consolidating existing collaborative activities and developing new ones.

The Strategy also aims to support the specific development of the three Faculties (Health and Social Care; Education; and Arts and Sciences) through providing broad guidelines by which they may operate.

Context

The changing context in higher education (HE) provides significant challenges to the development and implementation of our Collaborative Provision Strategy. Collaborative Provision offers the University new and varied opportunities for the University to enhance and widen our market presence; in providing opportunities for University staff and students, in terms of research, placements and training, exchanges; and in support of curriculum development and enhancement.

This context requires that the Collaborative Provision Strategy is seen as a developmental and adaptable tool as we will be required to respond quickly and in an effective way to the latest sector initiatives. However, this must be done within a framework of managing risk robustly whilst continuing to maintain quality and standards for all aspects of our awards and ensuring appropriate levels of resources are committed to the activities to ensure that the necessary oversight is sustained.

Aims

Our aim is to be in a position where we select our partnerships based on:

- Their fit with the University's strategies, ethos and values including those for collaborative provision and internationalisation;
- The 'quality record' and legal and financial standing of the proposed partner;
- Their potential to yield opportunities for research and knowledge transfer activities;
- Their potential to yield opportunities for programme and associated developments such as student exchanges that may span more than one Edge Hill department and/or Faculty.
- Their potential to enrich the overall student experience through curriculum development and enhancement.

In this respect, a focused direction will be taken in developing our collaborative provision locally, regionally, nationally and internationally:

- *Locally and regionally*, we will maintain and, where possible, develop partnerships which support access to higher education and work-based learning. These may include the validation of Foundation degrees with opportunities for progression from Further Education sector partners to Honours degree study at Edge Hill and partnerships in the Health and

Education sectors. Development in this area is likely to remain through specific franchise or outreach delivery arrangements.

- *On a national level*, the focus for development will be on reinforcing our excellence in particular academic areas or service sectors and developing 'niche' markets which enhance our reputation. Development in this area is likely to be in the Health and Education sectors through outreach, articulation, credit-rating and validation arrangements.
- *Internationally*, our direction will be towards institutional collaborations that build on our expertise across all Faculties to develop new programme and progression opportunities that will enrich the learner experience for both partners and their students. Development in this area is likely to be across all areas, through articulation, student exchange, franchise and validation (including dual award) arrangements.

Within this context, our **key strategic aim** is to develop **strong, effective, high quality, long-term, independently financially viable partnerships with a number of key partners in the UK and overseas**. This will be achieved by:

- Consolidating and expanding provision within current partnerships through agreed academic planning processes that meet institutional and market needs;
- Consolidating our relationship with key FE partners in the region in line with strategic objectives for widening participation and market presence and enabling progression of students to Edge Hill for level 6 and masters study;
- Continuing to develop new employer partnerships in each Faculty capable of supporting new programmes and progression opportunities for learners;
- Identifying new overseas partners with the potential to increase the recruitment/progression of international students to EHU's campus-based programmes;
- Expanding the opportunities for students to undertake accredited study in the workplace or abroad as part of their programme of study.

Reasons for Developing Collaborative Provision

The benefits of Collaborative Provision are listed below:-

- Enhancing access to higher education;
- Encouraging growth locally, regionally, nationally and overseas and increasing our market share;
- Increasing awareness of Edge Hill University and its brand amongst a wide range of stakeholders;
- Providing new opportunities for staff development and sharing good practice in curriculum development, learning and teaching and student support;
- Developing our links with business, industry and the commercial sector;
- Internationalising the curriculum and student experience.

Types of Collaboration

Collaborative partnerships are differentiated by the nature and extent of the responsibilities delegated to a partner organisation. On this basis, five fundamental types of collaboration have been identified, as outlined in the Quality Management Handbook:

- *Learning/Outreach Centres*: The University retains full responsibility for a programme delivered off-campus by its own staff. The responsibilities of the partner organisation are limited to the provision of teaching accommodation (Category 'B' provision) and, possibly, learning resources and student support mechanisms dependent on the particular collaborative agreement (Category 'C' provision).
- *Franchising*: The University authorises a partner organisation to deliver all or part of an Edge Hill programme (Category 'F' provision).
- *Articulation*: The University enables entry with advanced standing by students completing a named programme of study pursued in a partner organisation through a process of 'credit exemption' (Category 'E' provision).
- *Credit rating*: The University recognises and grants specific credit to externally-based training, often delivered through employers (Category 'D' provision).
- *Validation*: The University recognises a programme of study designed and offered by a partner organisation as leading to an Edge Hill award (Category 'F' provision).
- *School-based training, clinical and other placements; overseas student exchanges*: As part of their programme of study, students may undertake placements, training or take part in student exchanges (Category 'A' provision)

It is acknowledged that whilst the above is a basic outline of the University's categories of Collaborative Provision, alternative and 'hybrid' arrangements may also be developed and the Academic Planning Committee (APC) is advised in this regard by the Collaborative Provision Manager.

Edge Hill's quality management processes recognise and make an assessment of the different levels of risk between Collaborative Provision categories which are reflected in the specific arrangements for partner and delivery approval and programme monitoring (Quality Management Handbook, Chapter 5). In addition, all proposals are subject to consultation with relevant departments and services before approval and ensure that proposals can be appropriately resourced.

Nature of Partnerships

In this context, it is envisaged that the University will be in partnership with a range of organisations within different sectors, including:

- Further Education Colleges;
- Business;
- The Voluntary Sector;
- The Public Sector;
- Training Organisations;

- Other (professional) awarding bodies, e.g. in the development of articulation arrangements;
- Overseas providers of further and higher education, both public and private.

Although new and different partners present fresh risks for us there can be confidence that our Collaborative Provision quality processes, approved by Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC), will allow us to select our partners appropriately using a risk-based management approach.

Managing the Development

The growth of Collaborative Provision outlined above will be effected within a risk management framework incorporating a business case requirement; legal, financial and academic due diligence and covering the initial partnership, programme approval and delivery and our own capacity to support the implementation. This is a robust approach which allows us to maintain maximum flexibility in terms of the opportunities that may present themselves. The processes and procedures are detailed in Chapter 5 of the Quality Management Handbook (QMH) and the 'Guide to the Approval of Collaborative Partnerships'.

Appendix 1 illustrates the nature and extent of risk to be considered within the development of collaborative provision.

Processes are managed through defined planning and quality assurance mechanisms overseen by the Academic Planning Committee (APC) and Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC), supported through an operational structure for collaborative provision described below.

Management & Committee Structure

At the planning level, each Faculty considers Collaborative Provision proposals through its internal management structure. These then progress to Directorate for executive consideration before being submitted to Academic Planning Committee (APC) for approval to proceed to partner, programme and delivery approval, as appropriate. Legal and financial due diligence and the business case are considered for approval by Directorate, with academic approval being considered by the Validation and Audit Standing Panel (VASP). Following completion of these procedures, the proposal is submitted to Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) for final academic approval.

Once a Collaborative Partnership is approved, on-going monitoring and quality assurance of the provision is undertaken at Department and Faculty level with University oversight through Academic Quality Sub-Committee, as detailed in Chapter 5 of the Quality Management Handbook. The processes and procedures for approval, monitoring and review are tailored to the type of Collaborative Provision and the risks associated with the category of provision.

The Collaborative Provision Forum (CPF) contains representation from outreach, franchise and validation partners at HE co-ordinator/VP level. The Forum nominates one member to serve on the University's Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) which reflects the importance of partnership to the University.

The role of the Collaborative Provision Manager underpins the systems and structures for approving and monitoring Collaborative Provision, working with Faculty Partnership Officers to provide an integrated service to partners and ensuring full liaison at department, Faculty and University level. In addition, the Collaborative Provision Manager has a central role in supporting the Faculties to generate new business and for mediating new proposals from existing partners as well as ad hoc approaches from potential partners.

Conclusion

The University is committed to the development of Collaborative Provision in a way that will meet our business and developmental aspirations whilst enhancing access to, and the quality of, higher education for a range of students. This strategy provides a framework in which the University takes a flexible and proactive approach to partnership development, within the context of analysing and managing the risks effectively.

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Identification of Risk associated with Collaborative Provision

