

'GUIDANCE FOR ACADEMIC LIAISON TUTORS'

INTRODUCTION

This guide summarises the key responsibilities of Edge Hill University staff who work with Category F Collaborative Partner Organisations in the role of Academic Liaison Tutor.

The University has formal responsibility for the quality and standards of its awards, wherever they are delivered. In programmes delivered by collaborative partners the **role of liaison tutor is extremely important and provides the first line of communication with teaching staff in partner organisations.**

For partnerships to function effectively liaison tutors must be proactive in providing support and assistance to partners and this brief Guide describes the key elements of the liaison tutor role. It has been designed to be read in conjunction with [Chapter 5 of the University's Quality Management Handbook \(QMH\)](#) which details the different types of collaborative provision. The rest of this Guide relates to the liaison tutor arrangements for Category 'F' (franchised or validated) programmes.

Academic Liaison Tutors should note that specific responsibilities may differ slightly from Faculty to Faculty within Edge Hill, and should refer to the Collaborative Delivery Plan (CDP) for further guidance (see section 2).

It is important that Academic Liaison Tutors liaise as appropriate with other Edge Hill staff involved in collaborative provision, such as; the Faculty Partnership Officers (FPO), the University Collaborative Provision Manager (CPM), Associate Deans with responsibility for partnership matters and Heads of Department.

University departments preparing for the validation and delivery approval of Category 'F' provision will normally have identified a member of staff to fill the roles of Academic Liaison Tutor and Internal Verifier.

Training and development for liaison tutors are provided by the Academic Quality & Development Unit (AQDU). The AQDU also hosts a webpage with supporting materials at <http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/aqdu/collaborative-provision/quality-assurance-of-collaborative-provision/>.

Key contacts:

University: CPM Helen Collinson (x7895) / CPO Alison Bell (x7907)

Faculty of Arts and Sciences: FPO Liz Whittle (x7179)

Faculty of Education: FPO Louise Habberfield (x4016)

Faculty of Health and Social Care: FPO Susan Harrison (x7710)

Edge Hill University categorises its Collaborative Provision as follows:

Category F provision		Sub-category	
F	Delivery with a third party This is a partnership where some or all of the academic delivery of the programme is undertaken by a third party.	F1	Franchised (single modules) provision leading to an academic award or credit. This normally will only be utilised for UK provision only.
		F2	Co-delivery Engagement of a specialist 3 rd party in academic delivery to either part-deliver or co-deliver programmes, including in-country support linked to distance learning programmes.
		F3	Franchised (whole programmes) provision leading to an academic award or credit, including <i>dual awards</i> .
		F4	Validated provision leading to an academic award or credit (these would not normally be considered individually and therefore only when linked to another category of partnerships, normally F3: franchised awards), including <i>dual awards</i> .
		F5	Joint awards provision whereby two or more awarding bodies together provide a programme leading to a single award made jointly by both, or all, participants.

The provision for which you have been appointed as Academic Liaison Tutor will have been assigned a specific category to reflect the nature of the relationship. The role of the Academic Liaison Tutor is similar, regardless of the category. As Academic Liaison Tutor you need to be aware of the category and the nature of the relationship to enable you to undertake your role effectively.

It is important to note that the role isn't dissimilar to the role of a Programme Leader with the added complexity of the involvement of a third party in the academic delivery of the programmes.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. **Chapter 5 of the QMH** provides information about the role of the Academic Liaison Tutor. Liaison tutors are expected to visit partner organisations on a regular basis and serve as ‘critical friends’ to programme leaders and delivery teams, providing **academic** advice and support to staff at the Partner on matters such as:
 - Academic decisions regarding **admission** to a particular programme;
 - **Curriculum development, teaching and learning, assessment and moderation;**
 - The **provision of student academic support and the production of student support materials** including student handbooks;
 - How the **quality monitoring requirements of the University may interface with local quality assurance mechanisms** for programme reporting, student consultation and feedback;
 - The **production of programme-level AMR reports** (the partner is responsible for the production of this report);
 - The **provision and development of learning resources;**
 - Scholarly activity and staff development to support delivery of the provision.

2. **Every Category ‘F’ programme has its own Collaborative Delivery Plan (CDP).** This is authored by the Faculty Partnership Officer and is perhaps the most important operational document for liaison tutors as it sets out the key individual and shared responsibilities of Edge Hill and the partner organisation in delivering a franchised programme. The CDP, which is approved at validation, helps ensure that all of the key programme operations are completed, including:
 - managing student applications and enrolment;
 - setting assignments and exams;
 - preparing course materials and publicity;
 - marking, moderation and external examining; and
 - submitting marks to final assessment boards.

The CDP should be reviewed annually by the FPO, in conjunction with the partner and the liaison tutor, as appropriate, and any proposed changes signalled through the programme’s Annual Monitoring Report.

3. **Before the academic year starts Academic Liaison Tutors will have worked with partners to ensure that everything is ready for the programme to commence** - for example, programme and module handbooks will have been prepared and assignment specifications confirmed before being handed out to students. In checking programme and module handbooks, Liaison Tutors should confirm that the information is appropriate and that students are signposted to Edge Hill regulations and procedures as appropriate (including academic regulations, academic appeals procedures etc.)

Administrative ‘milestones’ such as assignment hand-in dates and deadlines for marking and moderation will also have been agreed. If the programme is new, the Academic Liaison Tutors, in conjunction with the Head of Department will also ensure

that appropriate external examiner arrangements have been made by the Faculty (note: that unlike honours degrees, external examiners are required for level 4 Foundation degree provision).

4. The Academic Liaison Tutor should **ensure that information on the Edge Hill VLE, which can be accessed by students in the partner colleges is up-to-date** and should liaise with relevant staff within their Department to ensure it is kept up to date, as appropriate.
5. As the academic year begins it is important to ensure that **students at partner organisations are also registered and enrolled as Edge Hill students**. Academic Liaison Tutors are not directly involved in this process, as this would be the responsibility of the FPOs in conjunction with Academic Registry but Academic Liaison Tutors may be consulted, especially by new partners, and any queries over registration should be directed to the FPO who will be able to advise partners.
6. Early in the academic year as applications for next year start to come in, **Academic Liaison Tutors may be required to make admissions decisions and/or provide guidance to staff in partner colleges making admissions decisions**. For guidance on your role in the admissions process you should consult your Head of Department or the Head of Admissions at EHU.
7. While **Academic Liaison Tutors will maintain frequent contact with partners' programme teams** – usually via the programme leader – by email and telephone, it is important that face-to-face contact is maintained with the staff at the partner college. There is no standard number of site visits for liaison tutors to complete although a couple of visits per term to a local partner, or once a term or twice-yearly to a remote (overseas) partner may be appropriate. You may also want to **combine your visits with a meeting with students or perhaps providing some targeted development for partner staff**, e.g. in assessment and moderation practice.
8. As part of Edge Hill's quality processes partners are required to organise **Student-Staff Consultative Fora (SSCF) and end-of-module evaluations and liaison tutors should check that these are being completed** through the timely receipt of module evaluation forms and SSCF minutes. Remember also that partners (and their students) will need to see the external examiner report for their programme and to contribute to the University's response, and it is the liaison tutor's role to facilitate these.
9. The **Academic Liaison Tutor will be required to attend the Programme Boards**, and in some instances may be required to Chair the meetings.
10. The Academic Liaison tutor should ensure that, at an appropriate point in the academic year, **Level 5 students are made aware of opportunities for progression to Level 6 study** at Edge Hill or to post-graduate study, if appropriate.

11. Midway through the academic year, as early assignments are completed, it is a **good idea to start the moderation process, in line with Faculty procedures to monitor submissions and the quality of the partner's assessment** – the end of the year is too late to identify any problems with standards, marking or feedback and early intervention can pay dividends.
12. **Ongoing monitoring of staffing and resources** is a key part of the Academic Liaison Tutors role and any changes to either must be notified by the partner so that the University can consider its impact on the quality of the students' learning experience. Make sure the partner supplies you with CVs of any replacement staff and if in doubt, consult your Head of Department, Faculty Partnership Officer or the Internal Verifier.
13. **Partner staff are invited to attend Edge Hill training** and development activities such as collaborative provision conferences and workshops and usually have the same access to Continuing Professional Development as University-based staff. **Academic Liaison Tutors should encourage staff from partner colleges to attend these events**, especially where they can benefit students' learning experiences.
14. Towards the end of the academic year Academic Liaison Tutors will have oversight of the assessment procedures at the Partner College and working with colleagues within the Faculty will **ensure that all coursework and examinations have been marked, second-marked and internally moderated and that arrangements have been made for sampling by the external examiner**. It is important to ensure that confirmed marks are available in good time for receipt by the relevant assessment board.
15. Depending on the Faculty, **Academic Liaison Tutors may be required to attend Assessment Boards**.
16. Finally, as the academic year draws to a close remember to liaise with your FPO and **check on the status of the Internal Verifier's report. You should work with the partner and support them in the preparation of their Annual Monitoring Report**.
17. At the end of the Academic Year, the External Examiner is required to submit an annual report. The **Academic Liaison Tutor should ensure that they obtain a copy of the report and discuss any issues arising from the report with the staff at the Partner College**. Depending on the Faculty, the Academic Liaison Tutor **may be required to draft a response to the report which will need to be sent to the External Examiner or if the responsibility for this lies elsewhere, may be required to input into the response**.

Note: Depending on which Faculty you are part of, there may be additional requirements you need to undertake as part of your role. You should seek advice from your Faculty Partnership Officer!