Chapter 5
Academic Partnerships

Updated October 2020

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INTRODUCTION

Edge Hill University develops academic partnerships with a wide range of third-party organisations, from UK-based employers, colleges and awarding bodies to overseas higher education providers, for the delivery of modules or programmes leading to the award of University credit or qualifications, or the provision of learning opportunities including student work placements, international exchanges and arrangements for entry with advanced standing (articulation). The University's procedures for managing the academic standards and quality of its academic partnerships are consistent with the following provisions of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Assurance Agency, March 2018)[1]:

"Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them."

"Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them."

Faculties develop academic partnerships in line with University strategies[2] and ensure that planning proposals receive the required Faculty scrutiny, supported by due diligence and a business case as appropriate to the type (category) of partnership being considered. The following pages describe the principles associated with the approval, review and closure of different types of academic partnership. Operational processes and further details on the templates/procedures for academic partnerships can be found in the internal standalone Guide to Academic Partnerships[3] and are fully informed by the QAA's Advice and Guidance on Partnerships[4].

Edge Hill University Taxonomy of Academic Partnerships

Academic partnership entails the delegation of certain activities normally conducted by the University to another organisation, most notably teaching, assessment and student support, although in all cases Edge Hill as the awarding body is ultimately responsible for academic standards and the quality of student learning opportunities. The following categories of academic partnership have been established for which different approval, monitoring and review processes have been developed to mitigate the associated levels of risk:

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[1] https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code.
[2] Including the Curriculum Strategy www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/curriculum-strategy-2014-2020/ and International Strategy www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/international-strategy/.
[3] Accessible by Edge Hill University staff within the Academic Quality and Development Unit WIKI: https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu
[4] www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/partnerships.

Category		Sub-Category		Risk Level (Low, Medium, High; Variable)
A	Placements and Study Abroad	A1	School-based training and other placements (ex. clinical) (UK)	L
		A2	Study Abroad and work placements (Erasmus)	L
		A3	Study Abroad and work placements (Overseas)	M
		A4	Clinical placements (UK)	V
B	Outreach Learning Venues	B1	Outreach Learning Venues (UK)	L
		B2	School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) venues	L
		B3	Outreach Learning Venues (Overseas)	L
C	Outreach Supported Learning Centres	C1	Outreach Supported Learning Centres: Education providers (UK)	M
		C2	Outreach Supported Learning Centres: Non-education providers (UK)	M
		C3	Outreach Supported Learning Centres (Overseas)	M
D	Credit-rating			M
E	Articulations	E1	Qualification recognition	M
		E2	Qualification recognition with a progression agreement	M
F	Delivery with a third party[5]	F1	Franchise (single modules)	M
		F2	Co-delivery	M
		F3	Franchise (whole programmes)	H
		F4	Validation	H
		F5	Joint awards	H
Schools Direct				H
Higher / Degree Apprenticeships[6]				H

[5] Modules or programmes delivered under a **franchise** arrangement are developed by the University for delivery wholly by a partner organisation. Modules or programmes within a **co-delivery** arrangement are developed by the University for joint delivery by the University and a partner organisation. Modules or programmes within a **validation** arrangement are developed and delivered wholly by a partner organisation but validated by the University, leading to the award of EHU credit and/ or qualifications.

Roles and Responsibilities

This section provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities related to the development and support of Academic Partnerships. Primary responsibility for partnerships resides with the relevant Faculties, with expert input from other areas of the University as detailed below.

Category		Sub-category		Responsible Area(s)
A	**Placements and Study Abroad**	A1	School-based training and other placements (ex. clinical) (UK)	Faculties
		A2	Study Abroad and work placements (Erasmus)	Faculties/International Office
		A3	Study Abroad and work placements (Overseas)	International Office
		A4	Clinical placements (UK)	Faculties
B	**Outreach Learning Venues**	B1	Outreach Learning Venues (UK)	Faculties
		B2	School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) venues	Faculties
		B3	Outreach Learning Venues (Overseas)	Faculties/International Office
C	**Outreach Supported Learning Centres**	C1	Outreach Supported Learning Centres: Education providers (UK)	Faculties
		C2	Outreach Supported Learning Centres: Non-education providers (UK)	Faculties
		C3	Outreach Supported Learning Centres (Overseas)	Faculties/International Office
D	**Credit-rating**			Faculties
E	**Articulations**	E1	Qualification recognition	Faculties
		E2	Qualification recognition with a progression agreement	Faculties
F	**Delivery with a third party**	F1	Franchise (single modules)	Faculties
		F2	Co-delivery	Faculties
		F3	Franchise (whole programmes)	Faculties
		F4	Validation	Faculties
		F5	Joint awards	Faculties
School Direct				Faculties
Higher and Degree Apprenticeships				Faculties

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[6] This includes non-degree programmes such as apprenticeships leading to graduate certificates (level 6) or foundation awards.

It is the responsibility of the proposing Faculty to identify an appropriate resource to support its academic partnerships, and this is normally in the form of an Academic Partnership Lead (based centrally within the Faculty), and Academic Partnership Liaison Tutors (based in the appropriate Department where the partnership provision is located).

Faculty Partnership Lead

The role of the Faculty Partnership Lead, identified by the PVC Dean, includes the following:

- Determining processes for the approval, review and closure of category A and B partnerships[7].
- Co-ordinating the required documentation for academic and business approval.
- Co-ordinating the documentation required for delivery approval / validation events.
- Maintaining comprehensive records of all partnerships, including any correspondence with partners or students.
- Negotiating with proposed partners in relation to their contract. Where required, additional advice or guidance should be sought from the Pro Vice-Chancellor and Dean of Faculty, or the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.
- Monitoring closure plans and associated actions, ensuring updates to the Faculty Quality Committee are submitted until all students complete.
- Supporting the Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor to fulfil their role.
- Attending delivery approval validation events where appropriate.

Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor

A role usually fulfilled by the relevant Programme Leader[8], Academic Partnership Liaison Tutors are required to undertake the following responsibilities:

- Being the primary contact for liaison with the partner, fielding queries and resolving issues.
- Completing the Annual Review form, in conjunction with other stakeholders and providing it to the partner for their comments.
- Completing the Closure Plan, negotiating a smooth and appropriate exit with the partner.
- Completing relevant documentation for initial approval and validation of a partner and any reapprovals. Attendance at any validation event may also be required.
- Working closely with the Faculty Partnership Lead, seeking advice and support where necessary in the fulfilment of the role.
- Liaising with other relevant Programme Leaders where the partner's portfolio includes multiple programmes[9].

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[7] These should be detailed in the Faculty Academic Quality Statement – see Quality Management Handbook Chapter 1 www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/01-the-quality-strategy-management-of-quality-and-standards.pdf.

[8] With the exception of category F4 where there is no equivalent EHU programme and a separate Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor would be required.

[9] Only one Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor is normally required per partner, with the expectation that they will liaise accordingly with other colleagues in the completion of the Annual Review paperwork.

- Where required, serving as a 'critical friend' to teaching staff, providing advice and support on University processes, teaching and assessment operations, student consultation and feedback, academic/ pastoral student support etc.
- In the case of more complex or high-risk provision, an Internal Verifier may be appointed by the Faculty to support the Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor and provide additional assurance. Where a subject is being delivered for which there is no direct equivalent within the University's portfolio, an External Verifier with appropriate discipline expertise may be appointed and remunerated by the Faculty (Note: this does not replace the requirement for an independent external examiner).

Academic Quality and Development Unit

Oversight responsibility for the range of academic partnerships at Edge Hill University resides with the Administration Manager (Quality and Governance) who is responsible for:

1. Maintaining the Register of Academic Partnerships[10].
2. Organising a central repository for Academic Partnership documentation.
3. Providing advice related to processes where necessary.
4. Co-ordinating the business and academic approval[11] of category C+ partnerships.
5. Reporting to Academic Board Committees and the Board of Governors with appropriate updates on the academic partnership portfolio.
6. Drafting the Institutional Annual Review Overview Report for Academic Partnerships[12].
7. Leading on the Annual Process Review[13] for this chapter to determine any changes required.

Partnership Approval Overview

At the commencement of a new academic partnership it may be deemed necessary to arrange for the signing of a **Memorandum of Understanding** between Edge Hill and the partner organisation. A standard template for this is available and may be tailored in conjunction with discussions with the Directorate. The MOU should normally be signed by a member of Directorate and must be shared with the Academic Quality and Development Unit for record keeping purposes. A log of current MOUs is maintained and updated where required.

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[10] Available at www.edgehill.ac.uk/aqdu/academic-partnerships/.
[11] Submission to the Academic Planning Committee.
[12] This is jointly authored by the Faculty Partnership Leads, drafted by the AQDU, and will be received by the relevant Committee for approval.
[13] See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 1 www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/01-the-quality-strategy-management-of-quality-and-standards.pdf.

All partners with Edge Hill University are approved for a defined period of time which, upon expiry, may be renewed. Standard periods of approval are detailed below, any changes to them requiring consideration via the Annual Process Review:

Category		Sub-category		Period of Partner Approval (renewable)
A	**Placements and Study Abroad**	A1	School-based training and other placements (ex. clinical) (UK)	Up to 3 years per provider
		A2	Study Abroad and work placements (Erasmus)	In accordance with Erasmus contracts
		A3	Study Abroad and work placements (Overseas)	1 year
		A4	Clinical placements (UK)	Ongoing but subject to 2- yearly review
B	**Outreach Learning Venue**	B1	Outreach Learning Venues (UK)	1 year
		B2	School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) venues	1 year
		B3	Outreach Learning Venues (Overseas)	1 year
C	**Outreach Supported Learning Centres**	C1	Outreach Supported Learning Centres: Education providers (UK)	5 years
		C2	Outreach Supported Learning Centres: Non-education providers (UK)	5 years
		C3	Outreach Supported Learning Centres (Overseas)	5 years
D	**Credit-rating**			5 years
E	**Articulations**	E1	Qualification recognition	5 years
		E2	Qualification recognition with a progression agreement	5 years
F	**Delivery with a third party[14]**	F1	Franchise (single modules)	5 years
		F2	Co-delivery	5 years
		F3	Franchise (whole programmes)	5 years
		F4	Validation	5 years
		F5	Joint awards	5 years
School Direct				5 years
Higher and Degree Apprenticeships				5 years

The period of approval granted for a partner commences from the academic year of the partner approval regardless of delivery implementation dates. Partners are approved for a standard period of 5 years. Delivery approval (to add new provision with the partner) and delivery re-approval (to renew or approve changes to existing provision delivered with this partner) also confer partner re-approval, and at each point the period of expiry is reset. Where no reset has occurred, partners can be reapproved in their final year if required (referred to as 'standalone partner re-approval'[15]).

Delivery approval is based upon evidence of the partner's current staffing and resources which will change over time and are revisited within the Annual Review.

Where a proposal is submitted to add additional provision at an approved partner where the category of approved provision is different, the highest category of partnership will have primacy in determining the required process. However, a proportionate approach to documentation and processes will be applied and should be discussed as early as possible with the Academic Quality and Development Unit.

Existing, approved partnerships may have additional modules added to their delivery portfolio and this can be done by Faculties in accordance with their module approval processes (see Chapter 4 of the Quality Management Handbook). In considering adding any provision to the partnership the appropriateness and availability of resources (including staffing) must be confirmed and the current Delivery Plan must also be reviewed to ensure it remains valid for the delivery of any new modules.

Business Approval

This should be undertaken prior to submission to the Academic Planning Committee and the required documentation is detailed in each category section below. Business approval does not have an expiry date however proposals are normally expected to proceed to validation (delivery approval) within 12 months of business approval being granted. Due diligence reports do have an expiry date and this is detailed in the the internal standalone Guide to Academic Partnerships[16]. In some cases, additional business case information is required to inform the business approval decision; further information on this can be found in the internal standalone Guide to Academic Partnerships[17]. After a period of five years, the business approval for the whole partnership (and all provision within it) requires review and

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[14] Modules or programmes delivered under a **franchise** arrangement are developed by the University for delivery wholly by a partner organisation. Modules or programmes within a **co-delivery** arrangement are developed by the University for joint delivery by the University and a partner organisation. Modules or programmes within a **validation** arrangement are developed and delivered wholly by a partner organisation but are validated by the University, leading to the award of EHU credit and/ or qualifications. **Joint awards** are provision whereby two or more awarding bodies together provide a programme leading to a single award made jointly by both, or all, participants.

[15] Details related to the process and documentation required for such an event can be found in the internal standalone Guide to Academic Partnerships.

[16] Accessible by Edge Hill University staff within the Academic Quality and Development Unit WIKI: https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu

[17] Accessible by Edge Hill University staff within the Academic Quality and Development Unit WIKI: https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu

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resubmission to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor. This does not affect the partner's approval period, however it provides an opportunity to review the partnership's business position holistically at an interim point, focusing on financial risk in particular. The following documents require revision and resubmission in these circumstances:

- **Overview paper** outlining the provision delivered with the partner, its years of operation etc.
- **Due diligence report.**
- **Performance reflection and projected 5-year business case**[18]

Category A partnerships: Placements and Study Abroad

A	Placement and Study Abroad	A1	School-based training, clinical and other placements (ex-clinical) (UK)
		A2	Study Abroad and work placements (Erasmus)
		A3	Study Abroad and work placements (Overseas)
		A4	Clinical placements (UK)

This category covers placements and Study Abroad, including sandwich years and student exchanges (Erasmus). Here the University delegates to a partner organisation limited responsibility for student learning and assessment for which Faculties hold significant responsibilities. Responsibility for the determination of appropriate processes for the approval, review and closure of partnerships which fall under category A resides with the Faculties and International Office.

Approval

For partnerships within these categories, partner and delivery approval are combined and responsibility for determining these processes resides within Faculties[19] and the International Office. Approval of such arrangements may include:

- Due diligence checks; including legal and financial.
- Consideration of any relevant country or partner intelligence.
- Consideration of the business case and any appropriate costings.
- Completion of clear, signed agreements with the partner which confirm the responsibilities of each partner.
- Completion of an appropriate health and safety check or risk assessment of the setting.

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[18] This should be a single business case for the whole partnership, and reflect the recruitment, funding, expenditure etc. of the partnership in its previous five years and project the next five years. There is no standard template for this however guidance can be sought from the AQDU.

[19] Please refer to Faculty Academic Quality Statements, available at
https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/Faculty+Quality+Processes+and+Responsibilities (EHU staff login required).

- (Placements only) Completion of 3-way learning agreements[20] between the student, HE provider and employer, before placements commence.

Review

Category A arrangements are approved for varying periods (between 1-3 years) and Faculties should describe within their Faculty Academic Quality Statement[21] how these are reviewed periodically to ensure their ongoing quality. Faculties and the International Office are also responsible for maintaining a database of approved placement and study abroad providers, which includes their period of approval/expiry for review purposes.

Closure

Appropriate arrangements for the termination of placement arrangements and study abroad agreements should be determined by the Faculty or International Office. These processes should include consideration of the University Student Protection Plan[22], adherence to the Office for Students' Conditions of Registration C1-3 related to student protection[23] and any implications for the student experience during teach out[24].

Additional Information (Placements)

Placements form an important part of the University's curriculum and emphasis upon employability. The Statement of Findings from Edge Hill University's Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) assessment of June 2017[25] specifically recognised the University's "strategic focus on the employability of students from all backgrounds, ensuring that students acquire knowledge, skills and understanding that are most highly valued by employers". Placements provide a formal opportunity to "consolidate and complement [their] academic learning, knowledge and skills with experience".

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[20] These typically cover:
- The roles, responsibilities and obligations of the University, the placement provider and the student.
- Employer's liability and compliance with statutory obligations e.g. concerning equality, data protection, freedom of information, health and safety, and environmental law.
- Ownership of copyright and intellectual property rights for work produced by the student while on placement.
- Provisions that enable the University or placement provider to suspend or withdraw from the agreement if any party fails to meet its obligations.

[21] Available at https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/Faculty+Quality+Processes+and+Responsibilities (EHU staff login required).

[22] www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/student-protection-plan/.

[23] www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/conditions-of-registration/initial-and-general-ongoing-conditions-of-registration/.

[24] Including consideration of any potential implications of such a closure for compliance with Competition and Markets Authority guidance – see *'UK higher education providers – advice on consumer protection law'* (CMA, 2015) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/428549/HE_providers_-_advice_on_consumer_protection_law.pdf.

[25] www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/teaching/tef-outcomes/#/tefoutcomes/provider/10007823.

Many Edge Hill University degrees also provide curricular (credit-bearing) and/ or extra-curricular placements whereby students acquire knowledge and experience that help them to achieve the Programme Learning Outcomes and enhance their employability. In the Faculties of Education and Health & Social Care, trainee teachers and health practitioners complete statutory placements as part of their professional training while Work-Based Learning (WBL), developed and delivered in association with employers, is also one of the defining characteristics of a Foundation Degree[26] where University regulations require at least a quarter of students' learning to be experienced in the workplace[27], either through discrete work-based learning modules or embedded across the curriculum. Sandwich Years[28] in some undergraduate honours degrees enable students to undertake at least 32 weeks of supervised work experience for which they receive academic credit that contributes to their final award[29].

Placement learning and Work-Based Learning can be differentiated as follows[30]:

- *Placement learning* is where the learner might be considered as a student first, employee second; i.e. they came to the placement experience by virtue of their studies.
- *Work-based learning* is when the learner might be considered as employee first, student second; i.e. they came to the Higher Education experience by virtue of their employment or employer.

However despite this distinction, for the purpose of their consideration as an academic partnership, placement learning and Work Based Learning are considered singularly as a category A placement, sharing the same approval, review and closure processes.

When approving programmes containing either work-based or placement learning, the following guidance may be utilised:

1. (Where the student is not already in relevant employment) The identification of placement opportunities which offer a learning experience that meets the needs and expectations of students and enables achievement of the relevant learning outcomes. Validation panels consider whether students will source their own placements (with support) or have placements provided for them and where such responsibility is located.
2. (Where the student is already in employment) How the appropriateness of the student's own work setting to the learning aims and outcomes is established

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[26] See *'Foundation Degree Characteristics Statement'* (QAA, 2015) www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/foundation-degree-characteristics-statement-2020.pdf?sfvrsn=6fc5ca81_10.

[27] See Academic Regulations section C12.

[28] The process for the addition of Sandwich Years to existing undergraduate degrees is described in QMH Chapter 4 www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/04-programme-and-module-approval-and-modification.pdf.

[29] Academic Regulations section J3.10.

[30] *'ASET Good Practice Guide for Work based and Placement Learning in Higher Education'*, ASET Work Based and Placement Learning Association, 2013), p.8 www.asetonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/ASET-Good-Practice-Guide-eWBPL.pdf.

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Latest version: October 2020

Possible questions:

- o Who sources or organises the placements?
- o What is the structure and duration of the placement?
- o What is the purpose of the placement (e.g. to meet compulsory requirements of the programme; an employability opportunity; to develop certain skills/ to gain certain experience)?
- o Is credit attached to the placement/ is the student assessed for competency?
- o Details of potential placement partners, including any overseas arrangement.
- o What funding is provided for the placement provider?

3. Quality assurance and risk assessment of placement settings and formal agreements with placement providers.

Possible questions:

- o Who has responsibility for identifying and organising placement opportunity?
- o Who approves this?
- o Who monitors and evaluates the placement?
- o If overseas, is there clear process outlining the relationship between the International Office and Faculty?
- o How do different role holders liaise and share information?
- o Are there clear definitions of who has responsibility for different parts of the process?
- o Is a risk assessment necessary? By whom is it conducted?

4. Preparation and support for students before, during and after their placements.

Possible questions:

- o How are students prepared in advance of the placement commencing?
- o What support is available to students during the placement, both from EHU and placement provider?

5. Assessment and evaluation of placements.
6. Recruitment, development and support of employer-mentors including their preparation for assessment (where this applies).
7. Arrangements for managing incomplete or unsatisfactory placement experiences[31].
8. Managing student or employer complaints or disciplinary issues that arise whilst a student is on placement.

Possible questions

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[31] Where a substitute placement cannot be provided and an alternative mode of assessment is required, course teams describe this in the Additional Assessment Information section of the relevant Module Specification. In all circumstances, alternative assessment must be capable of testing the Intended Learning Outcome(s).

- How is assessment carried out? Who is responsible for this?
- How do the students evaluate their experience and articulate skills acquired?
- How is feedback gathered from the placement provider on the student?
- How is feedback gathered from the placement provider on Edge Hill's placement management?
- Does feedback go to a committee or panel?
- How is the feedback loop closed?
- How does this evaluation feed into planning for next year?

Additional Information (Study Abroad)

Undergraduate students of Edge Hill University may undertake a period of study abroad which contributes to their undergraduate degree award, either through the European Union's Erasmus exchange programme or negotiated with an individual overseas provider. Study abroad is normally via an additional year (third year of four) located between levels 5 and 6 or exceptionally, a single semester replacing part of the second year of study. Where taken over one year, an additional 120 ungraded level 5 credits are awarded which appear on the student's transcript but do not contribute to their final degree classification. Where taken as a single semester, study abroad contributes 60 ungraded credits to the student's 120 level 5 credits and is excluded from the degree classification.

Erasmus

As a category A partnership, responsibility for developing appropriate processes in conjunction with the University's International Office are described in Faculty Academic Quality Statements[32]. Erasmus partnerships are approved via a proposal and approval process, taking into account student support and curriculum alignment issues and supplementing the standard due diligence completed by the EU before granting an institution's Erasmus Charter. As part of its own due diligence, the International Office reviews students' chosen institutions (which must be chartered Erasmus providers) to ensure that their individual learning needs will be met.

For Erasmus and other study abroad within the European Higher Education Area, the EHEA's First Cycle qualification descriptor provides a reference point for judging an overseas programme's equivalence to a UK undergraduate degree as defined within the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ, QAA 2014). When selecting the modules to be taken abroad the Edge Hill department, with advice from the external examiner, determines the stage of the provider's programme that equates most closely to the FHEQ level at which the student is to be assessed (typically level 5) and the alignment of module content and learning objectives with the relevant Edge Hill programme aims and learning outcomes. The European Credit Transfer System enables direct transfer of credit from an EHEA awarding institution where 1 ECTS credit equals 2 UK HE credits. **ECTS credit imported from Erasmus**

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[32] Available at https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/Faculty+Quality+Processes+and+Responsibilities (EHU staff login required).

study exchanges does not contribute to degree award classification which negates any requirement for the scaling of marks. While the default position is to import ungraded ECTS credit directly into students' profiles, for those who have failed assessment at the partner institution and have since returned to the UK a series of validated 'shell' modules of different credit values is available as a vehicle for re-assessment at Edge Hill University. Because the credit gained through Erasmus exchanges is ungraded and excluded from the calculation of students' degree classifications, these shell modules are similarly excluded and will be assessed as 'Pass/ Fail only'.

Study Abroad (other overseas territories)

For study outside the European Higher Education Area the proposing department assesses the suitability of the placement, accompanied by a health and safety audit. UK NARIC provides a service which compares overseas and UK higher education qualifications, and when selecting the modules to be taken abroad the Edge Hill department (with advice from the external examiner) determines the stage of the provider's programme that equates most closely to the FHEQ level at which the student is to be assessed (typically level 5), and the alignment of module content and learning objectives with the relevant Edge Hill programme aims and learning outcomes. In addition to level, the department establishes broad equivalence between the volume of learning and assessment to be undertaken and the Notional Learning Hours for which Edge Hill credit is to be awarded (where 1 credit = 10 NLHs).

Study Abroad agreements

Study abroad arrangements are supported by signed agreements that describe the roles and responsibilities of the University, overseas provider and EHU student; how the student will be taught, supported and assessed; and how complaints or disciplinary issues that arise while the student is abroad will be managed. For Erasmus exchanges a standard Erasmus agreement is used which is signed by the University's Deputy Vice-Chancellor, however for specific relationships between Erasmus institutions relating to student mobility a separate bilateral agreement is also signed prior to students embarking on any exchanges. Where they occur, study abroad opportunities are evaluated within programme monitoring and as part of departmental annual monitoring and periodic review.

Category B partnerships: Outreach Learning Venues

B	Outreach Learning Venues	B1	Outreach Learning Venues (UK)
		B2	School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (UK)
		B3	Outreach Learning Venues (Overseas)

In this category all teaching, assessment and student support are provided by Edge Hill University staff and the responsibility of the external venue provider is limited to the supply of teaching accommodation, including basic IT and display equipment[33].

Approval

Responsibility for the approval of category B venues resides with Faculties and their approach is outlined in their Faculty Academic Quality Statements[34]. A standard **Academic Partnership Venue Proposal** form is completed for consistency, along with a **Health and Safety Checklist**. An annual list of approved venues is supplied to the Academic Planning Committee for assurance and scrutiny. Academic liaison between the University and venue provider is managed by the Edge Hill Programme Leader.

Information on the documentation required for approval of venues can be found in the the internal standalone Guide to Academic Partnerships[35]. A **Venue/Room Hire Agreement** is normally produced and signed by the PVC Dean of Faculty (or their nominee). All learning venues must have been approved prior to the start of a programme or module's delivery.

Review

A list of the venues used within an academic year is part of the evidence base considered at Departmental Annual Monitoring[36]. Venues are also subject to review and re-approval using processes described in Faculty Academic Quality Statements.

Closure

Venues are approved on a rolling annual basis and therefore unlikely to require any formal closure processes, however where appropriate Faculties will describe these in their Faculty Academic Quality Statements.

Category C partnerships: Outreach Supported Learning Centres

C	Outreach Supported Learning Centres	C1	Outreach Supported Learning Centres: Education providers (UK)
		C2	Outreach Supported Learning Centres: Non-education providers (UK)
		C3	Outreach Supported Learning Centres (Overseas)

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[33] Where more extensive use of learning resources is required an Outreach Supported Learning arrangement may be more appropriate - see 'Category C', below.

[34] Available at https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/Faculty+Quality+Processes+and+Responsibilities (EHU staff login required).

[35] Accessible by Edge Hill University staff within the Academic Quality and Development Unit WIKI: https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu

[36] See Chapter 3 for further information on Annual Monitoring www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/03-annual-monitoring-periodic-review-and-internal-audit.pdf.

In this category University staff conduct all teaching and assessment while the partner organisation provides the venue, learning resources and some support services subject to individual negotiation (in respect of Category C3, this may include in-country support for Edge Hill programmes delivered via Blended or Distance Learning).

Initial Approval

Initial approval precedes the delivery approval event or validation and can be considered in two parts; business and academic approval. Business approval is required to be sought first, followed by academic approval.

Business Approval	Academic Approval
This is sought from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, co-ordinated by the Secretary to Academic Planning Committee.	This is sought from Academic Planning Committee and is in addition to any curriculum proposal paperwork submitted.
Documentation required: 1. Academic Partnership Proposal form 2. Due Diligence Report[37] 3. Country Profile (if the proposal is international) 4. Business Case (if either international or UK private sector)	**Documentation required:** 1. Academic Partnership Proposal form

Faculty Partnership Leads are responsible for co-ordinating the completion of the required partnership paperwork.

Delivery Approval

Following initial approval, the approval process continues comprising Institutional validation by the Validation and Audit Standing Panel and final approval by the Academic Quality Enhancement Committee (AQEC). Contract documentation will be drawn up by Faculties with support from other colleagues in the Institution, including **Delivery Plan** (see below).

For new programmes Institutional Validation is as described in Chapter 4[38] of this Handbook.

As standard, all partnership approval (or re-approval) events require the completion of the following documentation:

- A **Partner Overview Document**, completed by the Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor including audit of the partner's IT facilities and learning resources;
- A programme **Delivery Plan**[39], completed by the Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor in conjunction with the partner. This Plan will supplement the formal Contract

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[37] This is normally completed by Academic Registry or the International Office; see the internal standalone Guide to Academic Partnerships for further information.
[38] www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/04-programme-and-module-approval-and-modification.pdf.
[39] Template and guide available on the Academic Partnerships WIKI page (EHU staff login required).

between organisations and outlines individual and shared responsibilities for the programme's operation and quality assurance.

- (If appropriate) an updated **Programme Specification** to reflect additional delivery location and other information.

Existing approved partnerships where additional provision is to be validated to add to their existing delivery portfolio would require the following for a validation event:

- An updated version of their latest Partner Overview Document,
- A programme Delivery Plan[40],
- (If appropriate) an updated Programme Specification to reflect additional delivery location and other information.

Final approval of category C provision is via panel recommendation to AQEC (validation report) and is contingent on the signing of a formal **Contract[41]** between the University and partner organisation.

Contractual Arrangements

A formal contract for category C partnerships is required and requires completion and signing before delivery commences. Template contracts may be utilised in some circumstances, whilst other partnerships may require the commissioning of a bespoke contract. Advice during the contract development and negotiation stages can be sought from either the Pro Vice-Chancellor and Dean of Faculty, or the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, who can commission bespoke legal advice if required.

Responsibility for co-ordinating the completion of an appropriate contract for academic partnerships resides with the Faculty Partnership Lead, with ultimate responsibility residing with the Pro Vice-Chancellor and Dean of Faculty.

Annual Review

An Annual Review process operates for all approved partners at category C+ and is required regardless of whether any students have been recruited. The Annual Review of academic partnerships (formerly referred to as partner AMR) is an opportunity to review and monitor the currency and effectiveness of academic partners and their associated delivery of Edge Hill provision. It operates in conjunction with Departmental Annual Monitoring and programme monitoring but is a separate process. The Annual Review provides an opportunity to focus on the performance of both the academic partnership, and the provision delivered with it.

An **Annual Review form** is completed at the start of each new academic year for any provision delivered in the previous academic year. This is usually completed by the Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor, with support and input from the Faculty Partnership

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[40] If the partner is adding delivery of the same category to their existing portfolio it may be possible and appropriate to update the existing Delivery Plan instead of completing a new one; early advice on this should be sought from the AQDU.
[41] See the internal standalone Guide to Academic Partnerships.

Lead and any other related Programme Leaders who can provide peer support and review where required.

The Annual Review requires the consideration of a host of available evidence related to the programme's performance in the previous academic year, including external examiner reports[42], retention, recruitment and other performance data, student feedback (formal and informal) and evidence[43].

The Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor should also use the Annual Review exercise to review the programme Delivery Plan to ensure its ongoing appropriateness. Any required changes can be made in agreement with the partner but must not affect the division of approved responsibilities; any major changes would require formal delivery re-approval.

Closure

Upon identification of a required closure of either a partnership (and all its associated provision) or specific provision delivered with a partner (where the partnership is to continue), a **Closure Plan** requires completion[44]. This is normally undertaken by the Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor, with input from other stakeholders from across the University such as Learning Services. This plan is based upon the exit strategy information from the latest available version of the Partner Overview Document, updated with additional details where appropriate. The Closure Plans are developed with consideration of the University Student Protection Plan[45], adherence to Office for Students' Conditions of Registration C1-3 related to student protection[46] and due consideration of the impact on students.

Faculty Quality Committees are responsible for approval of the plan and the ongoing monitoring of any actions identified through closure and teach out (this should remain on the committee's agenda until the final student cohort has completed). The Academic Quality Enhancement Committee also receives the Closure Plans for approval, recommended from the Faculty Quality Committee.

Academic Partnerships which are in closure (i.e. teach-out is ongoing) still require completion of the Annual Review process until the final student cohort has completed.

Category D partnerships: Credit-rating

D: Credit-rating

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[42] External examiners are appointed to provision at FHEQ level 5 and above (level 4 for Foundation Degrees) and where a programme is being delivered on multiple sites external examiners differentiate clearly between delivery centres and student cohorts

[43] See the internal standalone Guide to Academic Partnerships for a full list and a process flowchart.

[44] This Closure Plan is distinct from the standard closure proposal paperwork completed for non-partnership provision.

[45] www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/student-protection-plan/.

[46] www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/conditions-of-registration/initial-and-general-ongoing-conditions-of-registration/.

This category typically covers short courses hosted by UK-based employers or non-educational training organisations and enables their recognition for the award of Edge Hill University academic credit through the approval of Intended Learning Outcomes appropriate to the required FHEQ level accompanied by a suitable assessment strategy. Assessment is subject to internal moderation by the host Edge Hill department and an external examiner is appointed to provision at level 5 and above.

Initial Approval

Initial approval precedes the delivery approval event or validation and can be considered in two parts; business and academic approval. Business approval is required to be sought first, followed by academic approval.

Business Approval	Academic Approval
This is sought from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, co-ordinated by the Secretary to Academic Planning Committee.	This is sought from Academic Planning Committee and is in addition to any curriculum proposal paperwork submitted.

Faculty Partnership Leads are responsible for co-ordinating the completion of the required partnership paperwork.

Approval

Following initial approval, validation is completed via the Faculty Module Approval process described in the Faculty Academic Quality Statement[47], supported by the following documentation:

- Partner's course materials (in their original format) describing the course aims, learning objectives, indicative content and teaching strategy.
- Partner Overview Document, with relevant sections completed.
- Draft Delivery Plan.
- A Credit Rating Coversheet[48] completed jointly by the host department and partner, detailing:
  - The FHEQ level and credit volume to be assigned;
  - Intended Learning Outcomes and assessment strategy (mapped by ILOs).
  - Supporting external examiner comments (level 5 and above).

The Module Approval process should give particular attention to the partner's preparedness to conduct assessment at HE level and the support to be provided by the host Edge Hill department over and above the standard provision of internal moderation. Final approval of Category D provision is via a recommendation (report or minutes) to Faculty Board or the appropriate delegated Faculty Committee. Processes for re-approval are as described in the Faculty Academic Quality Statement.

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[47] Available at https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/Faculty+Quality+Processes+and+Responsibilities (EHU staff login required).
[48] Available at https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/Template+Documents.

Contractual Arrangements

A formal contract for category D partnerships is required and requires completion and signing before delivery commences. Template contracts may be utilised in some circumstances, whilst other partnerships may require the commissioning of a bespoke contract. Advice during the contract development and negotiation stages can be sought from either the Pro Vice-Chancellor and Dean of Faculty, or the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, who can commission bespoke legal advice if required.

Responsibility for co-ordinating the completion of an appropriate contract for academic partnerships resides with the Faculty Partnership Lead, with ultimate responsibility residing with the Pro Vice-Chancellor and Dean of Faculty.

Annual Review

An Annual Review process operates for all approved partners at category C+ and is required regardless of whether any students have been recruited. The Annual Review of academic partnerships (formerly referred to as partner AMR) is an opportunity to review and monitor the currency and effectiveness of academic partners and the associated delivery of Edge Hill provision. It operates in conjunction with Departmental Annual Monitoring and programme monitoring but is a separate process. The Annual Review provides an opportunity to focus on the performance of both the academic partnership, and the provision delivered with it.

An **Annual Review form** is completed at the start of each new academic year, for any provision delivered in the previous academic year. This is usually undertaken by the Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor, with support and input from the Faculty Partnership Lead and any other related Programme Leaders who can provide peer support and review where required. For category D partnerships, particular focus should be given to confirmation that teaching and assessment by the partner remains consistent with the validated Intended Learning Outcomes.

The Annual Review requires the consideration of a host of available evidence related to the programme's performance in the previous academic year, including external examiner reports[49], retention and other performance data, student feedback (formal and informal) and other evidence[50].

Closure

Upon identification of a required closure of either a partnership (and all its associated provision) or specific provision delivered with a partner (where the partnership is to continue), a **Closure Plan** requires completion. This is normally undertaken by the Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor, with input from other stakeholders from across the University such as Learning Services. This plan is based upon the exit strategy information from the latest available version of the Partner Overview Document, updated with additional details

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[49] External examiners are appointed to provision at FHEQ level 5 and above, and where a programme is being delivered on multiple sites, external examiners differentiate clearly between delivery centres and student cohorts.
[50] See the the internal standalone Guide to Academic Partnerships for a full list and a process flowchart.

where appropriate. The Closure Plans are developed with consideration of the University Student Protection Plan[51], adherence to Office for Students' Conditions of Registration C1-3 related to student protection[52] and due consideration of the impact on prospective and current students.

Faculty Quality Committees are responsible for approval of the plan and the ongoing monitoring of any actions identified through closure and teach out (this should remain on the committee's agenda until the final student cohort has completed). The Academic Quality Enhancement Committee also receives the Closure Plans for approval, recommended from the Faculty Quality Committee.

Academic Partnerships which are in closure (i.e. teach-out is ongoing) still require completion of the Annual Review process until the final student cohort has completed.

Category E partnerships: Articulations

E	Articulations	E1	Qualification recognition
		E2	Qualification recognition with a progression agreement

Articulation arrangements are non-binding, non-exclusive agreements with other educational institutions or awarding bodies, including overseas, whose programmes or qualifications are recognised for entry to an Edge Hill programme after the normal start-point ('entry with advanced standing'), typically at level 5 or above. Articulation arrangements are based on credit exemption[53] as distinct from the importation of another organisation's credit or the award of Edge Hill credit.

Category E1 provides recognition of an awarding body's qualification where no individual delivery instance, centre or cohort is specified, and anyone holding the recognised qualification may be considered for advanced entry to the Edge Hill programme to which articulation has been approved. Category E1 usually applies to (professional) qualifications of awarding organisations rather than the programmes/ qualifications of individual HE providers or institutions (see E2, below). Articulating students apply to Edge Hill individually and meet normal programme entry requirements including English language proficiency for international students.

Category E2 provides recognition of a programme or qualification for articulation by a specific cohort, e.g. students of University (X)'s diploma programme articulate into the final year of a specified Edge Hill degree. Category E2 arrangements may be accompanied by formal Progression Agreements, nevertheless students must meet all Edge Hill entry requirements including English language proficiency for international students.

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[51] www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/student-protection-plan/.

[52] www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/conditions-of-registration/initial-and-general-ongoing-conditions-of-registration/.
[53] See Academic Regulations s. C7.4.

Initial Approval

Initial approval precedes the articulation approval event and can be considered in two parts; business and academic approval. Business approval is required to be sought first, followed by academic approval.

Business Approval	Academic Approval
This is sought from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, co-ordinated by the Secretary to Academic Planning Committee.	This is sought from Academic Planning Committee and is in addition to any curriculum proposal paperwork submitted.
Documentation required: 1. Academic Partnership Proposal form 2. Due Diligence Report 3. Country Profile (if the proposal is international)	**Documentation required:** 1. Academic Partnership Proposal form

In so far as an articulation arrangement recognises another awarding body or education provider's qualification for advanced entry, and no Edge Hill programme is being delivered or credit awarded, due diligence is likely to focus upon:

- any relevant regulation governing the external programme or qualification, typically Ofqual or the Scottish Qualifications Authority for UK-based awarding bodies, or national regulators of overseas providers;
- how the awarding body meets its regulator's requirements, particularly in relation to processes for marking and moderation including independent (external) verification[54] of assessment.
- (For category E2) The financial, legal and reputational standing of the organisation with which the University seeks to enter into an articulation agreement.

Faculty Partnership Leads are responsible for co-ordinating the completion of the required partnership paperwork.

Approval

Approval of the articulation route is via the Articulations Approval Panel of the University's Validation and Audit Standing Panel and supported by the following documentation:
- **'Mapping'**[55] of the awarding body's curriculum to the stage of the Edge Hill programme to which advanced entry is required, e.g. level 5 or 6 of an undergraduate honours degree. Documentation, which is completed by the Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor, clearly specifies the level and volume of Edge Hill credit to be exempted along with any additional 'bridging' (module) to support students' progression, typically to make up any curriculum deficit identified through the mapping. Curriculum mapping is accompanied by written verification by the

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[54] UK awarding organisations appoint external verifiers (moderators) to review marking and internal moderation undertaken in delivery centres, typically further education or private colleges.
[55] Template available at https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/Template+Documents (EHU staff login required).

external examiner[56] for the Edge Hill programme to which articulation is being sought.

Final approval of Category E arrangements is via a panel recommendation to AQEC (validation report) and preceded by the signing of the appropriate contract documentation.

Where there are changes to the curriculum at Edge Hill University or at the partner, the following action is required:
- When the **Edge Hill curriculum** changes, re-mapping is confirmed in the Annual Review form.
- When the **partner's curriculum** changes, an Academic Partnership Proposal form[57] and curriculum mapping document are submitted directly to the Articulations Approval Panel.

Annual Review

An Annual Review process operates for all approved partners at category C+ and is required regardless of whether any students have been recruited. The Annual Review of academic partnerships (formerly referred to as partner AMR) is an opportunity to review and monitor the currency and effectiveness of academic partners and the associated delivery of Edge Hill provision. It operates in conjunction with Departmental Annual Monitoring and programme monitoring but is a separate process. The Annual Review provides an opportunity to focus on the performance of both the academic partnership, and the provision delivered with it.

An **Annual Review form** is completed at the start of each new academic year for any provision delivered in the previous academic year. This is usually completed by the Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor, with support and input from the Faculty Partnership Lead and any other related Programme Leaders who can provide peer support and review where required. Bespoke documentation for category E partnerships is available, and particular emphasis should be given to reflecting on the continued appropriateness of the articulation route in the context of progressing students' attainment, and any curriculum drift which may impact on the mapping.

Annual Review normally requires the consideration of a host of available evidence related to a programme's performance in the previous academic year, including external examiner reports[58], retention and other performance data, student feedback (formal and informal) and other evidence[59], however in the context of category E provision the focus will be on students' retention and performance on the Edge Hill programme to which they have articulated.

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[56] See also Quality Management Handbook Chapter 2 www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/02-external-examiners.pdf.

[57] This form does not need to be submitted to APC for initial approval and proceeds directly to VASP articulation approval (via the AQDU).

[58] External examiners are appointed to provision at FHEQ level 5 and above, and where a programme is being delivered on multiple sites, external examiners differentiate clearly between delivery centres and student cohorts.

[59] See the the internal standalone Guide to Academic Partnerships for a full list and a process flowchart.

An Annual Review is required even where no students have articulated, to provide confirmation of the route's continued appropriateness and viability. Routes which have not recruited for two academic years require review by the appropriate Faculty Quality Committee to verify that they remain viable from a business perspective and a decision should be taken for their continuation or closure. The review may identify actions to stimulate articulation and should the review confirm the continuation of the partnership, the partner expiry period is unaffected.

Closure

Upon identification of a required closure of either a partnership (and all its associated provision) or specific provision delivered with a partner (where the partnership is to continue), a **Closure Plan** requires completion. This is normally completed by the Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor, with input from other stakeholders from across the University such as Learning Services. This plan is based upon the exit strategy information from the latest available version of the **Partner Overview Document**, updated with additional details where appropriate. The Closure Plans are developed with consideration of the University Student Protection Plan[60], adherence to Office for Students' Conditions of Registration C1-3 related to student protection[61] and due consideration of the impact on prospective and current students.

Faculty Quality Committees are responsible for approval of the plan and the ongoing monitoring of any actions identified through closure, however in the context of Category E provision closure occurs as soon as the partner's qualification has ceased to be accepted for advanced entry. The Academic Quality Enhancement Committee also receives the Closure Plans for approval, recommended from the Faculty Quality Committee.

Contract Documentation
A **Memorandum of Articulation** or similar Agreement should be drawn up following the articulation approval event and signed by the appropriate parties. A standard template is available and may be tailored in conjunction with discussions with Directorate.

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[60] www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/student-protection-plan/.
[61] www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/conditions-of-registration/initial-and-general-ongoing-conditions-of-registration/.

Category F partnerships: Delivery with a third party

F	Delivery with a third party	F1	Franchise of a single EHU module for delivery by a third party
		F2	Co-delivery of an EHU programme by a third party and the University
		F3	Franchise of a whole EHU programme for delivery by a third party
		F4	Validation and delivery of a third party's programme leading to an EHU award
		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

In this category, another educational organisation is approved to deliver Edge Hill modules or programmes under a franchise or co-delivery arrangement, or brings forward its own provision for validation leading to the award of an Edge Hill qualification or credit. While significant responsibilities for managing academic standards and the quality of teaching, assessment and student support are delegated to the delivery organisation, ultimate responsibility for both remains with the University as awarding body.

Where a programme does not recruit its first cohort within 2 years of the intended start date, or recruitment has been suspended for two consecutive cycles, re-commencement of delivery is subject to a formal review by the host Faculty of the Programme Specification and Delivery Plan to identify any changes that may affect delivery, particularly in relation to staffing and resources.

Initial Approval

Initial approval precedes the delivery approval event or validation and can be considered in two parts; business and academic approval. Business approval is required to be sought first, followed by academic approval.

Business Approval	**Academic Approval**
This is sought from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, co-ordinated by the Secretary to Academic Planning Committee.	This is sought from Academic Planning Committee and is in addition to any curriculum proposal paperwork submitted.
Documentation required: 1. Academic Partnership Proposal form 2. Due Diligence Report 3. Country Profile (if the proposal is international) 4. Business case (if either international or within the UK private sector)	Documentation required: 1. Academic Partnership Proposal form

Faculty Partnership Leads are responsible for co-ordinating the completion of the required partnership paperwork.

Delivery Approval

Following initial approval the approval process continues, comprising Institutional validation by the Validation and Audit Standing Panel and final approval by the Academic Quality Enhancement Committee (AQEC). Contract documentation will be drawn up by Faculties with support from other colleagues in the Institution, including a Delivery Plan (see below).

For new programmes, the process for Institutional Validation is described in Chapter 4[62] of this Handbook.

As standard, all partnership approval (or re-approval) events require completion of the following documentation:

- A **Partner Overview Document**, completed by the Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor, including audit of the partner's IT facilities and learning resources;
- A programme **Delivery Plan**[63], completed by the Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor in conjunction with the partner. This Plan will supplement the formal Contract between the organisations and outlines individual and shared responsibilities for the programme's operation and quality assurance.
- **CVs** of partner organisation teaching staff mapped to the EHU curriculum (modules) to be delivered.
- If appropriate) an updated **Programme Specification** to reflect the additional delivery location and other information.

Existing approved partnerships where additional provision is to be validated to add to their existing delivery portfolio would typically require the following for a validation event:

- An updated version of their latest **Partner Overview Document**,
- A new programme Delivery Plan[64],
- CVs of partner organisation teaching staff mapped to the EHU curriculum (modules) to be delivered
- If appropriate) an updated Programme Specification to reflect delivery location changes and other information.

Final approval of category F provision is via panel recommendation to AQEC (validation report) and is contingent on the signing of a formal Contract[65] between the University and partner organisation.

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[62] www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/04-programme-and-module-approval-and-modification.pdf.
[63] Template available at https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/Template+Documents (EHU staff login required).
[64] If the partner is adding delivery of the same category to their existing portfolio it may be possible and appropriate to update the existing Delivery Plan instead of completing a new one; early advice on this should be sought from the AQDU.
[65] See the internal standalone Guide to Academic Partnerships.

Contractual Arrangements

A formal contract for category F partnerships is required and this requires completion and signing before delivery commences. Template contracts may be utilised in some circumstances, whilst other partnerships may require the commissioning of a bespoke contract. Advice during the contract development and negotiation stages can be sought from either the Pro Vice-Chancellor and Dean of Faculty, or the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, who can commission bespoke legal advice if required.

Responsibility for co-ordinating the completion of an appropriate contract for academic partnerships resides with the Faculty Partnership Lead, with ultimate responsibility residing with the Pro Vice-Chancellor and Dean of the Faculty.

Annual Review

An Annual Review process operates for all approved partners at category C+ and is required regardless of whether any students have been recruited. The Annual Review of academic partnerships (formerly referred to as partner AMR) is an opportunity to review and monitor the currency and effectiveness of academic partners and the associated delivery of Edge Hill provision. It operates in conjunction with Departmental Annual Monitoring and programme monitoring but is a separate process. The Annual Review provides an opportunity to focus on the performance of both the academic partnership, and the provision delivered with it.

An **Annual Review form** is completed at the start of each new academic year for any provision delivered in the previous academic year. This is usually completed by the Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor, with support and input from the Faculty Partnership Lead and any other related Programme Leaders who can provide peer support and review where required.

Category F Annual Reviews should also be used as an opportunity to review the staffing resource delivering the provision at the partner. Where there are changes to partner staff delivering Edge Hill provision, the CVs of these staff must be reviewed by the Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor (and External Verifier, if applicable) and approved by the Faculty Quality Committee before delivery commences. This may or may not align with the timescales for consideration of Annual Reviews. If they are not aligned, i.e. delivery is commencing before the annual review is to be considered, Chair's Action may be required for the CVs and the CVs should be appended to the subsequent review.

The Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor should also use the Annual Review exercise to review the programme Delivery Plan to ensure its ongoing appropriateness. Any required changes can be made in agreement with the partner but must not affect the division of approved responsibilities; any major changes would require formal delivery re-approval.

The Annual Review requires the consideration of a host of available evidence related to the programme's performance in the previous academic year, including external examiner

reports[66], retention, recruitment (applications and enrolments), other performance data, student feedback (formal and informal) and other evidence[67].

An external examiner is appointed for programmes at FHEQ level 5 and above (level 4 for Foundation Degrees) who may visit the partner on request and/ or on a schedule agreed with the hosting Edge Hill department. Where a programme is being delivered by/ with multiple partner organisations, external examiners clearly differentiate between delivery centres and student cohorts in their reports.

Joint, Double and Dual Degrees

The term **joint degree** describes a collaborative arrangement in which two (or more) awarding institutions together validate[68] and deliver a programme of study which results in a single joint award of both (all) institutions. The development of such an arrangement requires detailed negotiation between the partner(s) and the development of a bespoke set of common regulations.

Key characteristics of a joint degree are:

- The programme has one Programme Specification including a single set of Programme Learning Outcomes.
- Modules are delivered by different partners, and students may study at one or more of the institutions working together in relation to the joint programme.
- Completing students receive one degree certificate authorised by both (all) partners involved in its delivery.
- One external examiner is appointed for the degree.

The term **double degree** (or 'multiple degree' where there are more than two partners) applies to a programme otherwise conceived, designed and delivered as a joint degree but where local legal or regulatory conditions prohibit the award of a single certificate. In these circumstances, students receive separate certificates/ transcripts/ diploma supplements from each awarding body which reference the others' existence and that students have completed a single, jointly conceived course.

The term **dual degree** describes a collaborative arrangement in which two awarding organisations design, validate[69] and deliver a course of study, however students receive separate degrees from both partners. Each is responsible for making its own award under its

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[66] External examiners are appointed to provision at FHEQ level 5 and above (level 4 for Foundation Degrees), and where a programme is being delivered on multiple sites, external examiners differentiate clearly between delivery centres and student cohorts.

[67] See the internal standalone Guide to Academic Partnerships for a full list and a process flowchart.

[68] To facilitate this, a Lead Partner may be nominated to host Institutional validation with other partners in attendance to include representatives of academic quality and registry functions.

[69] In this arrangement, each partner is responsible for taking the programme through its own Institutional approval (validation) process.

own regulations, however the programme's components form a single package requiring elements of joint management and oversight.

Key characteristics of a dual degree are:

- The overall study period and volume of learning is typically greater than for a single degree but smaller than if the two degrees were studied separately.
- Each partner develops its own Programme Specification, including Programme Learning Outcomes.
- Modules are delivered by both partners, often at different stages (years) of the programme, however each will generally deliver a substantial proportion at the level of the qualification it awards.
- Completing students receive separate certificates from each partner under its own regulations.
- Each partner makes its own arrangements for external examination (or other independent verification).

Joint/ double and dual degrees should be developed with cognizance of the QAA's Characteristics Statement for qualifications involving more than one degree-awarding body[70]. At the time of writing, no joint/ double or dual degrees have been validated by Edge Hill University.

Closure

Upon identification of the required closure of either a partnership (and all its associated provision) or specific provision delivered with a partner (where the partnership is to continue), a **Closure Plan** requires completion. This is normally undertaken by the Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor, with input from other stakeholders from across the University such as Learning Services. This plan is based upon the exit strategy information from the latest available version of the Partner Overview Document, updated with additional details where appropriate. The Closure Plans are developed with consideration of the University Student Protection Plan[71], adherence to Office for Students' Conditions of Registration C1-3 related to student protection[72] and due consideration of the impact on prospective and current students.

Faculty Quality Committees are responsible for approval of the plan and the ongoing monitoring of any actions identified through closure and teach out (this should remain on the committee's agenda until the final student cohort has completed). The Academic Quality Enhancement Committee also receives the Closure Plans for approval, recommended from the Faculty Quality Committee.

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[70] www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-involving-more-than-one-degree-awarding-body.pdf?sfvrsn=4cc5ca81_10.

[71] www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/student-protection-plan/.

[72] www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/conditions-of-registration/initial-and-general-ongoing-conditions-of-registration/.

Academic Partnerships which are in closure (i.e. teach-out is ongoing) still require completion of the Annual Review process until the final student cohort has completed.

School Direct partnerships

The University operates School Direct provision under two models[73]:

1. School Direct Placement model
2. School Direct Hubs

The School Direct Placement model fits into Category A whereas School Direct Hubs fit within the separate School Direct category which relates to the direct delivery of PGCE awards through a joint approach between Edge Hill and the Hub.

In this latter category the University works with a third-party School Direct Hub to deliver PGCE with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) programmes, with the partner responsible for those parts of the programme that have direct relation to QTS and professional practice. Approval, monitoring and review follow the processes for Category F provision described above, with Hub approval covering all participating schools which complete a spreadsheet containing details of teaching staff's roles, length of service, qualifications and experience in lieu of individual CVs. Academic liaison between the University and School Direct Hub is provided by the Edge Hill Programme Leader.

Higher and Degree Apprenticeships

In the context of Higher and Degree Apprenticeships, the academic partner is the employer with whom the programme will be delivered. Processes for the approval of new proposals broadly follow those for Category F as outlined above, however there are some important distinctions with Higher and Degree Apprenticeship approval, review and closure.

Degree-awarding bodies, including Edge Hill University, are ultimately responsible for the standards and quality of higher education qualifications delivered as Higher and Degree Apprenticeships in line with Expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Additional guidance from the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) acknowledges that:

"Work-integrated higher education learning programmes have been a longstanding feature of UK higher education... New models of apprenticeships that involve higher education represent the latest iteration of work-integrated higher education provision."[74]

Programmes for delivery as **Higher Apprenticeships** (i.e. those terminating in a FHEQ level 5 or 6 award, e.g. Foundation Degree or Graduate Certificate) and **Degree Apprenticeships** (levels 6 & 7, i.e. Undergraduate and Masters Degrees) broadly follow the quality assurance requirements for 'co-delivery with a third party' as summarised earlier in this chapter.

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[73] For further information see the AQEC minute reference 092/AQC/15.
[74] *'Quality Assuring Higher Education in Apprenticeships: Current Approaches'*, QAA 2nd edition, July 2018 www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/quality-assuring-higher-education-in-apprenticeships.pdf?sfvrsn=6e4cff81_26, section 2.2.

However, due to their distinctive characteristics this section deals with the approval, monitoring and review of apprenticeship programmes which include specific requirements for:

- Demonstrable alignment with the relevant Apprenticeship Standards[75];
- Appropriate balance of 'on-the-job' and 'off-the-job' learning[76];
- Compliance with the relevant Apprenticeship Assessment Plan[77], including arrangements for End Point Assessment (EPA);
- Arrangements for programme monitoring and review that also consider the progress of individual apprentices; and
- Formal written agreements between the University (Provider) and Employer, the Employer and the Apprentice, the University and an End-Point Assessment Organisation, and a tripartite agreement between the University, the Employer and the Apprentice (Commitment Statement).

Initial Approval

Initial approval precedes the delivery approval event or validation and can be considered in two parts; business and academic approval. Business approval is required to be sought first, followed by academic approval.

Business Approval	Academic Approval
This is sought from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, co-ordinated by the Secretary to Academic Planning Committee.	This is sought from Academic Planning Committee and is in addition to any curriculum proposal paperwork submitted.
Documentation required: 1. Academic Partnership Proposal form 2. Due Diligence Report 3. Country Profile (if the proposal is international) 4. Business case (if either international or within the UK private sector)	**Documentation required:** 1. Academic Partnership Proposal form

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[75] **Apprenticeship Standards**, developed by Trailblazer groups made up of employers in a particular industry sector, specify the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) required to demonstrate full occupational competence in the relevant job role.

[76] While the majority of learning will take place 'on-the-job', at least 20 per cent of an apprenticeship must involve 'off-the-job' learning delivered through scheduled learning activities.

[77] **Apprenticeship Assessment Plans**, devised by Trailblazer groups, outline how the KSBs are to be assessed through End-Point Assessment which is conducted at the final stage of the apprenticeship and includes at least two assessment methods, e.g. a work or practice-based project. Assessment Plans indicate whether EPA may be *integrated* within the programme or must be conducted through a standalone process (*non-integrated*).

Faculty Partnership Leads are responsible for co-ordinating the completion of the required partnership paperwork. The Institutional Apprenticeship Group should also remain appraised of any developments related to Higher and Degree Apprenticeships.

Delivery Approval

Following initial approval the approval process continues, comprising Institutional validation by the Validation and Audit Standing Panel and final approval by the Academic Quality Enhancement Committee (AQEC). Contract documentation will be drawn up by Faculties with support from other colleagues in the Institution, including a Delivery Plan (see below) for submission to the validation panel.

The documentation required for approval of an apprenticeship partner and delivery are as per category F partnerships (minus staff CVs as no delivery is undertaken by the partner staff), with some additions as follows:

In the Part B document (for new apprenticeships only):

- Evidence of employer-partners' direct involvement in programme design and development[78].
- Confirmation that programme admission processes satisfy the entry requirements set within the relevant Apprenticeship Standard and the University's own minimum entry requirements, including any opportunity for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)[79].
- 'Mapping' of Programme Learning Outcomes and content (modules) to the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours of the relevant Apprenticeship Standard.
- Evidence of how programme delivery and assessment schedules will accommodate the circumstances of apprentices in the specific employment setting ('Student Learning Journey'), with a minimum of 20% 'off-the-job' learning.
- Confirmed arrangements for End-Point Assessment (EPA) in accordance with the relevant Apprenticeship Assessment Plan, either _integrated_ within the programme or non-integrated, i.e. to be conducted by a third-party End-Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) endorsed by the employer and supported by a separate agreement between the University and EPAO. Where EPA is non-integrated, proposers describe how students will be prepared and supported to undertake it. For programmes with integrated EPA, proposers evidence relevant practice-based expertise and experience among academic delivery staff and external examiners[80].

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[78] "This may involve a cultural shift for some higher education providers, in that it positions employers as the main driver in the development process for apprenticeships that involve higher education qualifications. A traditional approach, where a higher education provider would invite an employer to endorse a programme after it has been designed, will not suffice" (_'Quality Assuring Higher Education in Apprenticeships: Current Approaches'_, QAA 2nd edition, July 2018 section 3.1).

[79] Unless specifically precluded by the relevant Apprenticeship Assessment Plan.

[80] As stipulated by the relevant Apprenticeship Assessment Plan.

- **Partner Overview Document**[81], completed by the proposing Faculty in consultation with the partner.
- **Apprenticeship Delivery Plan**[82], produced jointly by the University and partner and detailing individual and shared responsibilities for the Apprenticeship Programme's operation and quality assurance. This includes arrangements for: University-employer liaison; programme marketing, promotion and student recruitment; admission, enrolment and registration; induction and student support; managing academic appeals, academic malpractice, student complaints, student misconduct and interruptions to study; appointment and professional development of teaching staff; identification, support and training of workplace mentors; student representation and engagement; and programme monitoring and review, including monitoring of individual apprentices' progress and other Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) reporting requirements[83].

Any subsequent change to the location of delivery of any part of the apprenticeship will require the appropriate completion of a category B venue approval (see above), prior to the commencement of delivery at that venue.

Once approved as a partner for the delivery of Higher or Degree Apprenticeships additional apprenticeship programmes may be added, however these will require fresh delivery approval. Documents for the event will be updates to those provided at the previous apprenticeship approval event, alongside other documentation as agreed.

Where additional cohorts are to be added to an existing apprenticeship programme, no separate academic approval process is necessary although the Directorate (PVC External Relations) must be consulted in advance and additional Apprenticeship Programme agreements must be executed.

Final Institutional approval of apprenticeship programmes is via a panel recommendation to AQEC (validation report) which includes the following **standard conditions of approval:**

Prior to final Institutional approval the Proposers will provide confirmation of:
- Signed Employer-Provider Apprenticeship Training Services Agreement[84] and signed Apprenticeship Programme (Schedule 2) between the Employer (*xxx*) and Edge Hill University (*PVC External Relations*);
- Signed Apprenticeship Delivery Plan[85] (*All parties*).

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[81] Template available at https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/Template+Documents (EHU staff login required). Where any teaching is to be delivered on the employer's premises the POD will include an audit of the proposed learning venue(s) – see also Category B Outreach Learning Venues (above).
[82] Template available at https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/Template+Documents (EHU staff login required).
[83] To include **Quarterly Review Meetings** held between the hosting University department and employer-partner to consider individual apprentices' progress and development.
[84] Normally of 5 years' duration to coincide with the term of partner and delivery approval.
[85] Following programme approval, cohort-specific Apprenticeship Delivery Plans are produced based on the version that was approved at validation.

- Signed Agreement for End-Point Assessment Service between the University (*xxx*) and End-Point Assessment Organisation (*yyy*)[86].

Prior to the commencement of programme delivery[87] the Proposers will ensure the completion of:
- Signed individual Apprenticeship Agreements between Apprentices and the Employer (*xxx*);
- Signed individual 3-Way Commitment Statements between Apprentices, the Employer (*xxx*) and Edge Hill University (*Programme Leader*).

Following AQEC approval of a new Apprenticeship programme, the Senior Compliance and Monitoring Officer, Academic Registry submits a completed Higher Education Learning Aim Request Form to the Education and Skills Funding Agency accompanied by a letter, signed by the Director of Quality Assurance (as Chair of VASP) confirming that the qualification has completed internal validation and authorising it to be included within the Learning Aims Reference Service (LARS) for prescribed Higher Education qualifications.

Annual Review

An Annual Review process operates for all approved partners at category C+ and is required regardless of whether any students have been recruited. The Annual Review of academic partnerships (formerly referred to as partner AMR) is an opportunity to review and monitor the currency and effectiveness of academic partners and the associated delivery of Edge Hill provision. It operates in conjunction with Departmental Annual Monitoring and programme monitoring but is a separate process. The Annual Review provides an opportunity to focus on the performance of both the academic partnership, and the provision delivered with it.

An **Annual Review form** is completed at the start of each new academic year for any provision delivered in the previous academic year. This is usually undertaken by the Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor, with support and input from the Faculty Partnership Lead and any other related Programme Leaders who can provide peer support and review where required.

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[86] EPAO to be selected by the employer-partner acting on advice from the University. Where an apprenticeship programme is already in delivery with other employers, new partners will be expected to utilise the existing EPAO. Where no registered EPAO exists at the time of validation, an appropriate condition of approval will be set in relation to reaching an agreement as soon as one becomes available which should be reflected in the Employer-Provider Agreement.

[87] Employer-Apprentice Agreements and Commitment Statements may be signed during programme induction however this may not extend beyond the start of formal teaching. Signatures are obtained for late starters or additional students before they join the programme.