

**LONDON  
METROPOLITAN  
UNIVERSITY**



# **Collaborative Academic Partnership Lifecycle Process 2023-24**

**Version 2.0**

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## Contents

1. Introduction .....	2
2. Expectations for Standards and Quality .....	2
3. Categories of Collaboration .....	3
4. Initial Contact .....	5
5. Production of Memorandum of Understanding.....	6
6. Institutional Approval /Full Due Diligence.....	6
7. Development of an Academic Business Case.....	9
8. Course Approval.....	10
9. Language of Learning, Teaching and Assessment .....	11
10. Production of Institutional Memoranda of Agreement (IMoA) and Course Level Agreements (CLA) .....	11
11. Collaborative Partnerships Operational Manual.....	12
12. Articulation Agreements.....	12
13. Continuous Monitoring of Collaborative Provision .....	12
14. Student Feedback and Course Committee Meetings .....	12
15. Process for Repeat Due Diligence .....	13
16. Partner Review .....	14
17. Periodic Course Reviews.....	15
18. Cause for Concern and / or High Risk Partner Process.....	15
19. Changes to Collaborative Provision Over Time .....	16
20. Approval of Additional Courses.....	17
21. Changes in Staff Approved to Deliver Courses.....	18
22. Modifications to Approved Courses.....	18
23. Monitoring of Marketing Materials .....	18
24. Support for Collaborative Partners.....	18
25. Termination of Collaborative Partnerships.....	20
26. Deletion of Collaborative Courses .....	21
Flowchart 1: The Process of Approving a New Collaborative Partner.....	22
Flowchart 2: The Process of Approving an Existing Collaborative Partner to Develop Additional New Courses .....	23

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 London Metropolitan University (London Met) takes ultimate responsibility for the academic standards and quality of awards given in its name, irrespective of where these are delivered or who provides them. Arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with collaborative academic partners are implemented securely and managed effectively.
- 1.2 This section of the Quality Guide sets out London Met's processes with respect to the lifecycle of academic collaborative provision. The University is engaged in a variety of partnership and development activities; however, these processes focus on **academic credit bearing collaborative provision**. Guidance on other types of partnership not listed in the [Categories of Collaboration](#) below is articulated elsewhere. For example, employers seeking information on our apprenticeship courses, please see our [Apprenticeships](#) pages on the University website.
- 1.3 The University is responsible for the academic standards of all awards and credit granted in its name. Furthermore, the quality of learning opportunities offered under a collaborative arrangement must be comparable with those offered across the University and enable students to achieve the appropriate academic standards for the award. This is in line with the [Quality Assurance Agency's](#) (QAA) Core Practices.

## 2. Expectations for Standards and Quality

- 2.1 As a registered Higher Education Provider, London Met is obliged to act in accordance with the [ongoing conditions of registration as set out by the Office for Students](#) (OfS). The OfS is clear that where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it must have 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, and to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them.
- 2.2 This document outlines the processes followed by London Met to ensure that we enter into high quality strategic collaborations and are accountable for assuring the overall quality and academic standards of the provision delivered.
- 2.3 [Flowchart 1](#) provides an overview of London Met's processes for new collaborative partners.
- 2.4 [Flowchart 2](#) provides an overview of London Met's processes for existing and approved collaborative partners who wish to seek approval to develop additional course provision with London Met.
- 2.5 The processes outlined here meet the Guiding Principles outlined by the QAA in the UK Quality Code, [Advice and Guidance: Partnerships](#).
- 2.6 The University takes a risk-based approach to each collaboration and both proposed and approved collaborations are managed in line with the assessed risk. Throughout this document, unless otherwise noted, the processes for assuring the quality of collaborative and non-collaborative provision are the same, as are processes for both UK and overseas / Transnational Education (TNE) partners.

### 3. Categories of Collaboration

3.1 London Met enters into a number of different types of collaborative partnerships as follows:

- **Articulation Agreement** – A formal agreement whereby London Met grants entry to one of its courses with advanced standing to students completing a named course undertaken at a partner organisation.
- **Franchised Agreement** - An arrangement whereby London Met authorises and approves a partner organisation to deliver and assess part or all of one or more of the University’s own courses. London Met will hold direct responsibility for quality assurance, curriculum content, and the teaching, learning and assessment strategy. Students normally have a direct contractual relationship with London Met.
- **Validated Agreement** - An arrangement in which a module or course developed and delivered by another organisation (including staffing and resources/facilities) has been evaluated and deemed by London Met to be of an equivalent standard and quality to that of its own provision, and therefore suitable to lead to one of its own awards. Students normally have a direct contractual relationship with the partner delivery organisation.
- **Joint award** – A joint award is one which leads to a **single award** for a course which is jointly designed and/or delivered and / or assessed offered by London Met and one or more partner institutions. The single award certificate will be endorsed by all partners.
- **Dual award** – A dual award is one which usually leads to **separate awards** from two partner institutions involved in a jointly delivered course. Each award certificate will refer to the jointly delivered course.
- **Flying Faculty** - The whole course, or a part of a course, is delivered in a location away from London Met’s campus by London Met staff, who also carry out all aspects of assessment. Flying Faculty partnerships may be combined with teaching contribution from the partner institution.
- **Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Courses** – A CPD course is usually a course designed for professional development activity. A CPD course may consist of a module or be bespoke activity for a particular audience or purpose. A CPD course may be credit or non-credit bearing. Collaborative partners wishing to offer CPD courses are subject to approval arrangements detailed below at 3.3.

3.2 Over time, a partnership may change its agreement from a franchised arrangement to a validated arrangement. The table below explains when and how this may occur and the process associated with the change:

Provision	Reason for Change	Impact / Process
Franchised agreement – where course running at	With this type of agreement, the partner is delivering the same	Where a London Met School’s provision is subject to a

London Met	<p>course and modules as those delivered at London Met. London Met staff are responsible for course content and assessments and for sharing these with partner staff for delivery of the course at the partner institution.</p> <p>London Met courses are subject to periodic and / or curriculum review and the course offered in partnership may require updates as part of the review process.</p>	<p>periodic and / or curriculum review, School staff are advised to inform the partner in advance and request that they be a part of the review and contribute to the review and updating of modules and module content.</p> <p>The partner may then adopt the newly approved franchised courses and continue with a franchised arrangement.</p>
Franchised agreement – where course not running at London Met	<p>On occasion, a course may be franchised but it is not running at London Met’s home campuses. This could be because London Met have developed a level 5 course for franchised arrangements with the view that students may then access London Met to top up to level 6 or it could be that London Met decide to cease delivery of the course at its own campuses but continue to support the delivery of a course in partnerships only</p>	<p>The School must be able to continue to provide academic support in terms of course content and assessments to enable the partner to continue with a franchised arrangement.</p>
Franchised agreement changing to validated agreement	<p>A partner may consider changing from a franchised agreement to a validated agreement where the partner decides it does not wish to adopt the course and / or module changes following a London Met periodic and / or curriculum review or if London Met inform the partner that it can no longer support the course content or assessments for a franchised course then a partner may consider adopting the course as a validated agreement.</p>	<p>Where a partner does not wish to run a revised and updated franchised course but instead continue with the existing course, consideration must be given as to whether the course is fit for purpose in accordance with OfS ongoing conditions of registration and QAA requirements. A partner may wish to continue with some modules but revise others to ensure the course is up to date and fit for purpose in the country of delivery.</p> <p>Where a partner wishes to change from a franchised arrangement to a validated</p>

		<p>arrangement to continue with the course delivery then it is expected that the course be re-approved as a validated course to ensure the partner has sufficient resources in place to adopt the course as its own. The course re-approval process will confirm the Intellectual Property of an approved validated course as belonging to the partner rather than London Met.</p>
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### 3.3 CPD Courses

3.3.1 Approval may be required for CPD course proposals with collaborative partners. The type of partnership and type of CPD course will determine how a proposal is considered and the level of approval required as set out below:

Collaborative Partner	Credit / Non-Credit Bearing Short Course	Process
Existing established partner	Non-Credit Bearing	<p>Proposal scheduled at APC for noting.</p> <p>No 'approval event' needed but submission of intended courses to AQD for consideration.</p>
	Credit Bearing	<p>Proposal scheduled at APC for noting.</p> <p>Approval event required unless modules already approved as part of an existing CLA.</p>
New partner	Non-Credit Bearing	<p>Proposal scheduled at APC for noting.</p> <p>Full due diligence required.</p> <p>No 'approval event' needed but submission of intended courses to AQD for consideration.</p>
	Credit Bearing	<p>Proposal scheduled at APC for noting.</p> <p>Full due diligence required.</p> <p>Approval event required.</p>

## 4. Initial Contact

### 4.1 Expression of Interest

4.1.1 There are several ways in which a potential new partnership may be initiated. The first contact may come from the potential new partner directly, from the University itself through an academic or Business Development contact or through an agent. Regardless of this, the process for development of the partnership follows the same process.

4.1.2 Where an institution wishes to explore entering into a collaborative arrangement with London Met, the first step is to complete and submit an [Expression of Interest \(form AQDC001\)](#).

4.1.3 The Expression of Interest is received by the Head of Academic Partnerships and Short Courses who will also undertake initial due diligence checks. The IDD process will consider and initially assess the following:

- The type of institution
- Ownership
- Location
- How long the institution has been operating
- Other current partnerships
- The content of the potential partner's website
- The potential partner's online presence
- Regulatory information (this will be different for UK and TNE institutions).

The Expression of Interest and Initial Due Diligence check will be forwarded to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) for consideration and approval

## **4.2 Approval of the Expression of Interest**

4.2.1 Where it is considered by SLT that a submitted Expression of Interest aligns with the University's strategic plans, then SLT will approve the proposal to continue to the next stage of the approval process.

## **5. Production of Memorandum of Understanding**

- 5.1 Following approval of the Expression of Interest and at the request of the partner, the University may arrange for a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to be produced and signed.
- 5.2 It is not standard procedure to issue a Memorandum of Understanding, but it is noted that some countries may require the production of an MoU in which case an MoU may be issued by exception.
- 5.3 A Memorandum of Understanding is not a legally-binding agreement but rather it is intended to provide a framework under which the business relationship between the parties will be conducted and to allow the parties to undertake certain exploratory work prior to the signing of a further agreement e.g. an Institutional Memorandum of Agreement.
- 5.4 The Partnerships Office will draft a Memorandum of Understanding on the standard University template. This is sent to the partner contact to check. If the partner requests changes to any clauses in the MoU, these will be considered by the University Solicitor. Once both parties are satisfied with the draft contract, it is circulated for signing by both parties.
- 5.5 At the end of the signing process, both parties will each retain a fully signed copy. The usual duration of a MoU is two years unless otherwise agreed by both parties.

## **6. Institutional Approval /Full Due Diligence**

- 6.1 Where a new partner wishes to engage in collaborative provision that results in a University award or credit then further scrutiny of the partner will be necessary, and this process is known as Institutional Approval.
- 6.2 The Institutional Approval process is managed by AQD and is a full due diligence process with the aim of scrutinising the financial viability, the legal status and ethics, governance and quality structures of the partner. This process will include contributions from the Partnerships Office, Communications, Finance and Legal teams.
- 6.3 The process is risk based and the level of documentation and scrutiny required will be determined on the basis of the complexity and volume of provision as well as perceived risk. The result of the process will determine if the partnership should proceed.
- 6.4 The aims of the Institutional Approval process are to:
- confirm there is strategic alignment and consistency with the London Met vision;
  - ensure that the collaborative arrangement is financially viable;
  - ensure that the partner institution is financially stable;
  - ensure that the partner institution has appropriate mechanisms for governance;
  - ensure that the partner institution is of appropriate standing and unlikely to put standards and quality at risk;
  - ensure that the partner institution has effective quality assurance mechanisms;
  - ensure that the partner institution has appropriate resources and policies for student support;
  - ensure that where government approval is required, this has been obtained or is likely to be obtained.
- 6.5 AQD will work with the prospective partner institution to gather the relevant information and complete the [template \(Form AQDC003\)](#), with support from the Partnerships Office and Head of Academic Partnerships and Short Courses respectively, where appropriate.
- 6.6 Partners will be asked to submit the required information by completing the template and submitting supporting evidence in the form of documents and /or web links. The list of documents is indicative, and in some cases, partners might provide different documents to be able to meet any requirements. The types of documents required will depend on the type of institution and may include:

**A: Information to be gathered for a UK based institution which is a publicly funded body**

- A brief history of the institution including details of its ownership.
- Supporting documents which help to determine the nature of the institution:
  - mission statement;
  - strategic plan;
  - prospectus.
- Details of the institution's governance and management structure including membership and terms of reference of its governing body and important internal committees, including a diagrammatic representation of the organisational and internal structure;
- Relevant financial information:
  - budget statements;
  - management accounts;



- Audited published financial statements including income and expenditure account, balance sheet, cash flow statement and notes to the accounts.
- A detailed description of the academic and administrative resources available at the institution to support the collaborative arrangements proposed (to include provision for welfare and wellbeing, support services and pastoral care available to students);
- Evidence about the quality of provision at the institution:
  - reports from funding bodies;
  - reports from external quality assurance bodies;
- The Student Protection Plan, where appropriate;
- The Access and Participation Plan or Statement;
- Details of the complaints and appeals procedure;
- The safeguarding policy;
- Liability insurance e.g. copies of valid insurance certificates;
- Health and Safety policy;
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, including any policies on supporting students with disabilities and / or difficulties;
- Details of any Refund and /or Compensation Policy
- Details of any other UK HEI or educational bodies with which the institution has, or has previously had, collaborative arrangements, if applicable.
- Staff Development Policy and details for monitoring the performance of teaching staff.

**B: Information to be gathered for a UK based institution which is privately funded, or of charitable status or an overseas public institution**

The following documentation will be required in addition to that listed in A above:

- The constitution of the institution which gives it legal status, e.g. Articles of Association, Trust deed, Act of Parliament;
- Audited accounts (including director's notes) for the preceding 3 financial years;
- Corporate plan/business plan/financial forecasts;
- A list of names under which the organisation/institution trades;
- Litigation and disputes, i.e. details of any proceedings (civil, criminal or arbitration), dispute or complaint, any order or judgement, if relevant;
- A written statement from prospective institution confirming the organisation's/institution's ability to enter into contract with London Met;
- Employment policies and profile (to include details of staff numbers broken down separately for academic and administrative staff);
- Policy on the admission of students and a profile of the student body;
- Quality assurance arrangements currently in place for: curriculum development, approval, monitoring and review of courses, collection and evaluation of student feedback, management and administration of assessment processes, feedback to students on assessed work, tracking students progression and achievement, student consultation and representation systems;
- Independent evidence of the institution's reputation and standing, including checking any previous association of the institution with another UK higher education institution;
- Documentation about any legal or regulatory requirements (including the institution's legal

capacity to award 'Joint' or 'Dual' awards, if relevant) to which the institution must conform.

### **C: Information to be gathered for a UK based institution intending to recruit international students**

- An accreditation report from one of the approved accreditation bodies and evidence of sponsor status from the UKVI will be required.

### **D: Information to be gathered for a privately funded overseas institution**

The following information will be required in addition to that identified in A (publicly funded) and B (privately funded and/or having charitable status) above:

- Details of government approval/accreditation/recognition of the institution (copies of approval letters or certificates issued by the local ministry of education, the national quality assurance agency, etc.).

6.7 The documentation submitted will be considered by a number of teams across the University including AQD, Finance, Legal and the Partnerships Office.

6.8 AQD will review and collate the feedback submitted by the University's Finance, Legal and Partnership Office teams and produce a recommendation report. The Collaborative Partnerships Committee (CPC) has ultimate responsibility for granting institutional approval.

6.9 Once institutional approval has been granted, the proposal may proceed to the creation of an Academic Business Case for consideration at the University's CPC.

## **7. Development of an Academic Business Case**

7.1 Once Institutional Approval has been confirmed, a partner will work with one or more of London Met's academic Schools and the Head of Academic Partnerships and Short Courses to develop an Academic Business Case. It may be expedient to work on Institutional Approval and an Academic Business Case concurrently, but the course approval process can only commence if both Institutional Approval and the Academic Business Case are approved by CPC.

7.2 The Academic Business Case will need to demonstrate that the resources needed to deliver the course (staffing and learning materials) are already in place or, where additional resources are needed, how these will be provided. The proposal will include a sound market case and a fully approved financial plan for at least the first three years of delivery.

7.3 The Academic Business Case proposal will be scrutinised and approved at London Met School level (at the School Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee). The School committee will ensure that it is able to support the proposal and will confirm the appointment of a London Met Academic Liaison Tutor.

7.4 Once approved at School level, the Academic Business Case will be considered by the University's Collaborative Partnerships Committee (CPC). Members of CPC may request additional information and responses to queries before recommending approval to proceed.

7.5 Once approved the proposals are forwarded to AQD to progress the course approval process.

## 8. Course Approval

- 8.1 The process for approval of collaborative courses is in line with the approval process for courses delivered on campus and is described in the [Quality Guide](#).
- 8.2 AQD will seek assurances from the Partnerships Office that the partnership fees have been agreed in principle between London Met and the partner before commencing the approval process.
- 8.3 AQD take a risk-based approach to course approval. The different levels of risk are managed by processes requiring a significant level of external input, approval to proceed by the relevant University Committees and Boards (as described above), the involvement of specialist staff across the University and scrutiny by the Approving Panel.
- 8.4 In addition to the usual course and module information to be submitted for approval, the Approval Panel will also receive the CVs of any partner staff who are proposed to deliver the learning, teaching and assessment on the course/s.
- 8.5 As a minimum, the following people will form the panel for the course approval event of a partner:
- The Chair;
  - The Proposing Team (the team will comprise of partner staff and London Met School staff which is likely to include the ALT(s) and Head of Collaborative Provision);
  - The designated AQD Officer;
  - The appointed External Adviser(s);
  - The appointed internal panel member;
  - The appointed student panel member.
- 8.6 A key purpose of a 'visit' element of the event is for the panel to be assured that the appropriate resources (physical, electronic and staffing) are in place or planned for in order for delivery of teaching and learning to take place as well as accessible study spaces and social spaces for students.
- 8.7 The resource visit element may take place in person, if the approval event is conducted at the partner's premises. For an in-person approval event, it would be usual to build in a tour of the partner premises as part of the event.
- 8.8 The resource visit may also be conducted virtually where the approval event is conducted virtually. Where this is the case, the panel would expect to see a video tour of the partner premises which shows the specific teaching areas, any Virtual Learning Environment platforms used by the partner and any specialist facilities required for the delivery of the course. Please note that this does not need to be a professionally commissioned video.
- 8.9 Where a resource visit is conducted virtually, if the Approval Panel's decision is to approve the course(s), then it is expected that the ALT will complete a site visit report at the earliest opportunity following the first in-person ALT visit to the partner premises. The completed site visit report should be forwarded to AQD.
- 8.10 During the visit, there will be an opportunity for the Panel to meet senior management, teaching, administrative and technical staff and to talk to existing students and alumni about

their learning and teaching experience. Partner staff will be supported before and during the visit by University School staff who will be members of the proposing team.

- 8.11 Conditions may be set during the approval process which need to be met before final approval can be given. Once the process is complete, this will be confirmed in writing through the circulation of a final report by the AQD Officer.

## **9. Language of Learning, Teaching and Assessment**

- 9.1 An award delivered by a Collaborative Academic Partner and approved by London Metropolitan University will usually be written, taught and assessed in English.
- 9.2 Exceptions to this may be agreed where the provision meets a business need and reflects strategic priorities, such as widening participation or internationalisation.
- 9.3 Delivery in a language other than English (the language of study) will only be approved when London Met is working with a partner that has a track-record for high quality higher education provision, which will be determined at the Institutional Approval stage of the approval process and evidence is provided showing that the benefits of the partnership are likely to substantially outweigh the risks associated with delivery in a foreign language.
- 9.4 A collaborative partnership proposal where it is intended that the language of study will be a language other than English must put forward in accordance with the [Quality Assurance of Awards Taught and Assessed in a Language other than English](#) process.

## **10. Production of Institutional Memoranda of Agreement (IMoA) and Course Level Agreements (CLA)**

- 10.1 Prior to proceeding to award academic credit in line with the categories of partnerships identified above, both parties will need to agree the contractual arrangements and sign an Institutional Memorandum of Agreement (IMoA). The IMoA is a legally binding document which confirms the agreed terms of the contract, including financial arrangements and serves as the foundation document which embodies the collegiate agreement between the parties.
- 10.2 The Institutional Memorandum of Agreement (IMoA) sets out the contractual arrangements between the University and a collaborative academic partner. The period for institutional approval detailed in the IMoA is usually three years for the initial approval and thereafter five years.
- 10.3 When the Institutional Approval process is completed, the Partnerships Office will begin the preparatory work of liaising with the Partner and the School(s) regarding the Institutional Memorandum of Agreement to agree drafts, partnership fees and to take this forward to finalisation and sign off. Sign-off must be secured from the University Vice Chancellor or an appointed nominee and the appointed representative of the partner.
- 10.4 The IMoA needs at least one associated Course Level Agreement (CLA) to be brought into force.
- 10.5 A Course Level Agreement (CLA) is entered into pursuant to and subject to the provisions of the Institutional Memorandum of Agreement entered into between the University and the Partner Institution. The Partner Institution agrees to deliver the Course subject to the terms of the Course Level Agreement and the Institutional Memorandum of Agreement.

- 10.6 The Partnerships Office and the AQD Partnerships Team will liaise closely to ensure that all necessary contracts are in place before delivery commences at the new partner institution.
- 10.7 No teaching of approved courses may commence until all necessary contracts are completed.

## **11. Collaborative Partnerships Operational Manual**

- 11.1 Whilst the IMoA outlines the legal and financial arrangements for a collaborative partnership and the CLA sets out the terms of course delivery, the partnership is supported by the University's [Collaborative Partnerships Operational Manual](#) (POM). The POM outlines the operational responsibilities associated with the day-to-day delivery of the provision and may be updated from time-to-time.
- 11.2 It is the responsibility of the Academic Liaison Tutor (ALT) to manage the training and support for partners associated with the POM

## **12. Articulation Agreements**

- 12.1 London Met may grant credit to applicants from a partner's course and allow them to enter a related London Met course with advanced standing. Please contact the Student Recruitment and [Business Development](#) department for further information on articulation agreements.

## **13. Continuous Monitoring of Collaborative Provision**

- 13.1 Courses delivered in collaboration will be subject to ongoing monitoring to confirm they remain in good standing in terms of academic standards and quality.
- 13.2 All collaborative provision is subject to continuous monitoring in line with University processes. Continuous monitoring is supported by internally and externally derived performance data along with the outcome of feedback, reports and minutes of meetings etc.
- 13.3 Each course and module delivered is assigned to an External Examiner (an academic member of staff from another institution). Each Examiner will view student work and attend appropriate University award boards and produce a report on the academic standards and quality of the provision delivered in collaboration.
- 13.4 Feedback will also be sought on a regular basis from current students to feed into the continuous monitoring processes. Student views are usually captured through Course Committee Meetings (see below).
- 13.5 The outcome of all continuous monitoring is reviewed on an annual basis and a report on the academic standards of all provision is provided to the University Collaborative Partnerships Committee
- 13.6 More information on the Continuous Monitoring Process is available in the [Collaborative Partnerships Continuous Monitoring Guide](#)

## **14. Student Feedback and Course Committee Meetings**

- 14.1 In the context of collaborative provision, Student Representatives (Student Reps) help to make a difference to the lives of London Met students by raising issues around specific course-related areas such as tutor feedback or library resources. Each course is represented by its own Student Rep elected by their fellow students. Gathering the views of their classmates and presenting them to the course team, Student Reps have the opportunity to work closely with teaching and management staff. The Collaborative Partner is responsible for ensuring that Student Reps of each student cohort are nominated at the start of each intake.
- 14.2 Partners are required to hold bi-annual course committees with Student Reps. Dates for the meetings should be agreed between the Collaborative Partner and the ALT. Course Committees should be chaired by an appropriate member of staff at the Collaborative Partner institution e.g. Course Leader and a member of the University from the relevant School (usually the ALT).
- 14.3 Student Reps will be invited to Course Committee meetings to feedback on the experience of the cohort. We also expect that student representation is reflected in the governance structure where appropriate.
- 14.4 There may be instances where the ALT may wish to get feedback from the Student Reps without the Partner being present. This should be agreed in advance of the meeting.
- 14.5 Minutes of the Course Committees should be written by the Partner and be in a format consistent with that of the University and should be sent to the ALT and AQD within four weeks of the meeting taking place.
- 14.6 At the end of each module student feedback should be obtained. Course Leaders in Collaborative Partner institutions are advised to consult with the ALT on questions that will be asked in the module feedback survey.
- 14.7 Course evaluation shall be carried out by the Collaborative Academic Partner. A summary of the survey results should be made available to the ALT and AQD as part of the continuous monitoring process.

## **15. Process for Repeat Due Diligence**

- 15.1 All collaborative partnership arrangements will be subject to institutional level review at regular points throughout the duration of the collaborative agreement. This is the process of Repeat Due Diligence.
- 15.2 The Repeat Due Diligence process will be conducted initially after the first two years of a partnership and will be managed by AQD and the Partnerships Office.
- 15.3 Repeat Due Diligence will also include:
  - Finance Review: The Partnerships Office must ensure that Finance is provided with appropriate links to the most up to date company accounts from the partner. It may be necessary in cases where the accounts are not publicly available to liaise with the partner to obtain the most up to date company accounts. Should Finance find it necessary for credit checks to be undertaken, then subsequent costs will be charged to the relevant project code linked to the partner.
  - Legal Review: It is highly unlikely that there will be a requirement for the Office of the

University Secretary's legal team to comment on all partner Repeat Due Diligence, as any changes to company structures, ownership or governance, should be undertaken at the time of declaration by the partner. On occasion, it may become apparent during the Repeat Due Diligence process that there have been changes to the legal standing of the partner which have not been made known to the University, in which case a legal review will become necessary.

15.4 The outcome of Repeat Due Diligence must include an overall risk rating of Low, Medium or High. As a consequence of the rating, due diligence will be repeated for the ratings as follows:

- Low – repeat due diligence every two years;
- Medium – repeat due diligence every year;
- High – production of a high-risk partner report and further detailed investigation potentially involving discussions with the partner institution as this could lead to a decision to terminate the collaboration.

## 16. Partner Review

16.1 Partner Review is a process used to review academic collaborative partnerships to confirm that they continue to operate well, that the quality and standards are good, and that the partnership should remain in continuing approval.

16.2 The process is managed by AQD and details of the process are available [here](#). Partners are subject to partner review after the first three years of operation and then every five years, although London Met reserves the right to instigate Partner Review at any point during the lifetime of a partnership.

16.3 Partnerships considered higher risk may be subject to an interim review within a shorter timeframe as agreed at initial approval.

16.4 Partner Review is an opportunity for the School(s) and the partner to reflect on the operation, management and development of the partnership as well as to undertake a thorough review of the student outcomes, student experience, quality and standards of the provision. Partner review processes do not replace Continuous Monitoring and Repeat Due Diligence processes; however, the outcomes of these, along with issues recorded in the Collaborative Partner Dashboard will be used to inform Partner Review. Partner Review guidance is available [here](#).

16.5 ADQ maintains a schedule of Partner Reviews and publish (usually annually) a list of the partners due to undertake review in the following academic year.

16.6 The outcomes of a Partner Review will be to:

- Approve the continuing collaborative delivery of the course(s) without conditions; or
- Approve the continuing collaborative delivery of the course(s) with conditions and/or recommendations; or
- Withhold approval.

16.7 A review panel may decide that they would like to approve the continuing collaborative delivery of the course(s) but have concerns which they do not feel can be entirely resolved through the setting of conditions, or they may wish to give time to see the conditions embedded and the impact of the conditions on the student experience. In such instances the review team may

decide to approve the continuing delivery of the course(s) for a shorter period of time (usually one year). Following such an outcome a further review will be arranged within the stipulated timeframe.

## **17. Periodic Course Reviews**

- 17.1 Periodic Course Review is the process that provides an opportunity to critically reflect on the performance of a course or subject area, make the case for its continuation, assess its academic health and currency, and, if necessary, to propose and validate changes. In effect, Periodic Course Review is a mechanism for both reviewing and reapproving the course.
- 17.2 For collaborative partners, the [Partner Review](#), as set out above provides an opportunity to review and reapprove the continuation of the course(s). This is particularly the case where there are no or minor proposed changes to the course(s).
- 17.3 Collaborative partners may wish to use the opportunity of Partner Review to highlight where validated course(s) are in need of updating in which case the Partner Review panel can consider and approve proposed changes and updates to modules. Approval may be subject to conditions and / or recommendations and a Partner Review panel may also withhold approval if they believe it is necessary.
- 17.4 Collaborative partners offering franchised provision, that is to say offering London Met courses and modules that are also being delivered at London Met will be included in any periodic course review taking place at London Met.

## **18. Cause for Concern and / or High Risk Partner Process**

- 18.1 Partnerships can present risks in a number of areas, including quality and standards or finance. Where London Met believes that a partnership might be high risk and / or a cause for concern, the Cause for Concern / High Risk Partner process has been introduced in order to address instances where the quality of collaborative provision falls significantly below the expectations set out in the [Academic Regulations](#), [Quality Guide](#), [Collaborative Partnerships Operations Manual](#) (POM) and legal agreements, which are the primary reference points relating to the management and delivery of a collaborative course .
- 18.2 Other types of reason for identifying a partnership as a cause for concern and / or high risk would include the following. This list is not exhaustive:
- Poor repeat due diligence outcomes, or refusal to engage with the process;
  - A poor outcome from an internal or external (e.g. QAA) review of provision;
  - Continued lack of engagement with quality processes;
  - Poor ongoing student feedback, including where there are a number of similar complaints from students at the partner on London Met awards;
  - Continual low recruitment onto partnership courses such that there is a risk to the Student Experience;
  - Loss of in-country accreditation.
- 18.3 This process provides an opportunity to resolve the problems in a collaborative way before a suspension or termination notice is issued. It is intended to enable a dialogue between London Met and the Collaborative Partner, in order to agree on an appropriate and timely course of action and hence to protect the interests of students on the courses involved.



#### **18.4 Key Stages of the Causes for Concern / High Risk Partner Procedure are:**

1. A serious issue affecting quality, standards or delivery of collaborative provision arrangements is raised either at School or University level. This may happen at any time during the operation of the partnership or as a result of continuous monitoring and review activities which include Course Committees and ALT visits.
  2. The Head of Academic Quality Assurance and / or Quality Manager (Partnerships) is notified and the issue is logged by AQD.
  3. AQD will notify:
    - The relevant School(s), this will involve senior staff including the Dean of the School and School Head of Collaborative Partnerships
    - The Head of the Partnerships Office
    - (for high risk situations) The University Secretary who may update the University's SLT on the level of risk involved
  4. An initial investigation into the cause for concern is initiated by AQD
  5. AQD will discuss the issue with relevant School staff and will draw up a proposed course of action and/or improvement plan using form [AQDC012](#) in agreement with relevant School staff and the ALT for the specific partnership
  6. The improvement plan will be monitored closely; where there is insufficient improvement within the agreed timescales, AQD will inform SLT
  7. SLT may grant further time for improvements to be made, initiate an emergency Partner Review or may seek to give notice to close the course(s) and / or terminate the partnership
  8. All cases of Cause for Concern will be submitted to the Collaborative Partnerships Committee (CPC)
  9. Issues that constitute a serious threat to the quality or standards of an approved University award will be referred to CPC for further consideration and advice
- 18.5 In some cases, problems may arise which cannot be resolved by the process of Partner Review, the Continuous Monitoring processes or the Cause for Concern / High Risk Partner processes. The Institutional Memorandum of Agreement (IMoA) and Course Level Agreement (CLA) will normally distinguish between situations where one (or both) of the institutions is in breach of its obligations under the agreement, and where those breaches are serious, the 'innocent party' may well have the right to terminate.

### **19. Changes to Collaborative Provision Over Time**

#### **19.1 Change to the Location of Study**

- 19.1.1 At initial approval, there will be a resource visit to confirm the appropriate resources (physical, electronic and staffing) are in place in order for delivery to take place. The approved location will be included in the IMoA.
- 19.1.2 If it is proposed that the location of delivery changes, for example the partner moves to new premises, before delivery of course(s) can begin, there will need to be a further resource visit, noting that this may be conducted virtually in the first instance with the expectation that, if approved, the ALT will complete the site visit report as soon as possible after the first in-person visit to the partner.
- 19.1.3 A risk-based approach is taken with regard to the constituency of the Approval Panel required

to approval a change to an approved location of study. Subject to approval of the new location of delivery by the Approval Panel, the Partnerships Office will issue a variation to the IMoA and CLA confirming the new location of delivery.

19.1.4 Failure to notify the University of a move to a new location may constitute a material breach to the terms of the IMoA and may result in the termination of the contract.

## **19.2 Addition of a Further Location of Study**

19.2.1 If, during the period of a contractual arrangement, the partner wishes to deliver existing approved provision at another location in addition to the approved site as noted in the IMoA, this will require London Met approval.

19.2.2 There will need to be a resource visit to the proposed new location before delivery can begin.

19.2.3 A risk-based approach is taken with regard to the constituency of the Approving Panel required to visit the new location and is outlined in [the form AQDC013 – Collaborative Additional Site Business Case Form](#).

19.2.4 Subject to approval of the new location of delivery by the Approving Panel, the Partnerships Office will issue a variation to the IMoA and CLA confirming the additional location of delivery.

19.2.5 Failure to notify the University that teaching is taking place at a location other than that listed in the IMoA may constitute a fundamental and material breach to the terms of the IMoA and may result in the termination of the contract.

## **19.3 Additional Cohort Request**

19.3.1 If, during the period of a contractual arrangement, the partner wishes to deliver an extra cohort in addition to the approved cohort intakes as noted in the IMoA, this will require London Met approval.

19.3.2 Requests for additional cohorts must be made using the Collaborative [Additional Cohort Request Form \(AQDC014\)](#); the request will be considered at the School Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (SLTQC) with the outcome noted at the Collaborative Partnerships Committee (CPC).

19.3.3 Subject to approval by the relevant SLTQC and CPC, the Partnerships Office will issue a variation to the IMoA and issue a CLA confirming the additional course(s).

## **20. Approval of Additional Courses**

20.1 If, during the period of a contractual arrangement, the partner wishes to deliver further courses in addition to those in the IMoA and CLAs, this will require approval.

20.2 Please see [Flowchart 2](#) which depicts the process for existing and approved collaborative partners wishing to add course provision to its partnership agreement.

20.3 A risk-based approach is taken with regard to the resource visit. If it is considered that the new provision can be delivered within the existing resources, AQD will recommend that the approval process proceed without a resource visit, if the course requires specialist teaching and / or teaching resources, then a resource visit will be required (noting as above that a resource visit may be conducted virtually in the first instance). Subject to approval by the

Approving Panel, the Partnerships Office will issue a variation to the IMoA and issue a CLA confirming the additional course(s).

## **21. Changes in Staff Approved to Deliver Courses**

- 21.1 At initial validation, the University's Approval Panel will confirm that the partner staff proposed to contribute to the learning, teaching and assessment of students are suitably qualified and experienced. It is acknowledged, however that there are likely be changes over time to the partnership staff team.
- 21.2 As a result, on an annual basis, and before teaching begins, the relevant School LTQ Committee will confirm the constituency of course teams. Where new staff are proposed, their CV will be submitted to the School (via the ALT) for approval.
- 21.3 If there are any staff changes during the academic year, these must be approved by the relevant School LTQ Committee (via the ALT) before staff contribute to course delivery.

## **22. Modifications to Approved Courses**

- 22.1 To ensure that all courses at London Met, including those at collaborative partners maintain their currency and respond to market forces and student feedback, it is sometimes necessary that Course Teams propose amendments.
- 22.2 Modifications to approved collaborative courses follow the same processes as for courses delivered at London Met itself. The process is detailed in the [Quality Guide](#).
- 22.3 Course amendments will be divided into material and non-material modifications. The types of modifications and processes required are outlined in the [Modifications Requirements Table \(AQD030\)](#).
- 22.4 A [Course Review](#) will be triggered if courses exceed material modifications of 30% of core modules, or 20% of core modules and another material change such as a change of title.

## **23. Monitoring of Marketing Materials**

- 23.1 Throughout the lifetime of a partnership, both the University and Partner may make changes to their marketing materials.
- 23.2 It is a requirement of the agreement between a partner and London Met that promotional materials are checked by the University's Marketing team before publication in order to conform to [CMA](#) requirements.
- 23.3 In addition, the Partnerships Office will undertake periodic checks of partner web pages to confirm the accuracy of content. Where any discrepancies are identified, the partner will be contacted and advised of any errors which require amendment or updating.

## **24. Support for Collaborative Partners**

### **25.1 Academic Liaison Tutors**

## **Role of the Academic Liaison Tutor (ALT)**

24.1.1 The role of the ALT is crucial to successful partnerships. The ALT provides regular and consistent contact with the partner and is the partner's first point of reference for academic queries. The ALT is expected to monitor compliance with the POM and liaise regularly with the School's Head of Collaborative Partnerships as the key point of contact for operational and support queries. The ALT is the point of liaison with partner students and is best placed to capture the student voice and is instrumental to creating a sense of belonging to the university and creating a positive student experience.

## **Partnership Visits**

24.1.2 In order to complete their responsibilities effectively, it will be essential that ALTs visit their partner institutions. During the first year of a partnership, the first physical visit would be expected to be scheduled at the start of the academic partnership and the second visit would take place during the middle of the second semester. In addition to the physical visits, ALTs would be expected to conduct further virtual visits using mediums such as MS Teams, Zoom or BBB, for example.

24.1.3 The visits are expected to be undertaken by the ALT but there may be occasions when that individual is not available and the School will identify a suitable, temporary replacement to ensure continuity of support. When a visit cannot take place due to unforeseen circumstances such as civil unrest, then it is expected that any physical visit will be substituted by a virtual visit.

24.1.4 Following any visit (physical and virtual), the ALT must complete the ALT report.

## **ALT Report**

24.1.5 The ALT report is an essential record of the ongoing quality assurance monitoring of the partnership. ALTs must complete and submit their ALT reports to the ALT Coordinator within four weeks of return from each visit. No further visits will be approved until a satisfactory report has been received, scheduled at the School LTQ Committee and approved. Non-compliance with any of the above may result in the ALT role being reallocated.

## **Key responsibilities**

Details of the role and responsibilities of the ALT are contained within the ALT Handbook; in summary the ALT will:

- Have responsibility for managing and monitoring the academic standards and quality of its collaborative partnership courses
- Provide academic advice on courses and course development
- Advise and monitor the operation of assessment practices and assist the partner in ensuring all documentation is ready for relevant University Boards
- Advise on the suitability of staff in the partner organisation to teach on the collaborative courses
- Be the point of contact for the partner Student Voice
- Work with partner staff to identify an appropriate ongoing staff development schedule

relevant to the university's requirements for delivery of its courses at partner institutions

- Be the point of liaison between partner staff and the University's module leaders / course leaders
- Provide regular updates on the partnership to the School Head of Collaborative Partnerships, the Partnerships Office and AQD
- Monitor and support the partner to ensure compliance with the POM
- Complete the ALT report post-visit and completion of academic enhancement plans in relation to the partner course(s)
- Monitor, review and update action plans which will include responses to External Examiners, Student Voice, outcomes and actions identified through continuous monitoring and academic enhancement, for example
- Be involved (where possible) in the partner approval processes

### **Suggested Visit Agenda**

Visits will be tailored to the needs of the partner and the timing of the visit and may include:

- student induction
- staff induction
- attendance at graduation ceremonies
- evaluation of staff development needs
- delivery of staff development
- review of previous action plan
- guest lectures
- liaising with relevant university staff to provide the partner with support, for example supporting recruitment events, alumni events and guest speakers or other university events
- meeting with current students to advise of progression opportunities
- meeting with teaching staff
- meeting with student representatives
- attending staff/student liaison meetings and course committees
- approval of course documentation such as course / module specifications / minor mods
- evaluation of student performance data

### **24.2 Meetings With Partners**

24.2.1 All partners are invited to attend the annual Partnerships Day which is held at London Met and is usually timed to coincide with graduation ceremonies.

24.2.2 The Partnerships Office and School Heads of Collaborative Partnerships may schedule regular catch-up meetings to provide partners and School staff a forum to share partnership updates and discuss potential developments from the partner and London Met.

## **25. Termination of Collaborative Partnerships**

25.1 Contractual arrangements will be for the term outlined in the IMoA and may be extended as required after the expiry date. If during the lifetime of the contract, however, either partner wishes to terminate the arrangements, then the processes for termination as outlined in the

relevant clauses of the legal contract will need to be followed.

25.2 Termination is likely to be in response to one or more of the following:

- A fundamental and material breach of the terms of the contract;
- The inability, for any reason, of either party to perform their obligations;
- Financial concerns, e.g. liquidation, bankruptcy;
- Identification of the partnership as high risk;
- The desire by one or both parties not to continue with the partnership.

25.3 In the event that either party wishes to terminate the collaborative partnership, the Partnership Termination process will need to be followed [using AQDC016 Partnership Termination Request Form](#).

25.4 Upon termination of the partnership, the courses will cease to be marketed and recruited to and the contractual clauses relating to the consequences of terminating the agreement and teach out will be invoked.

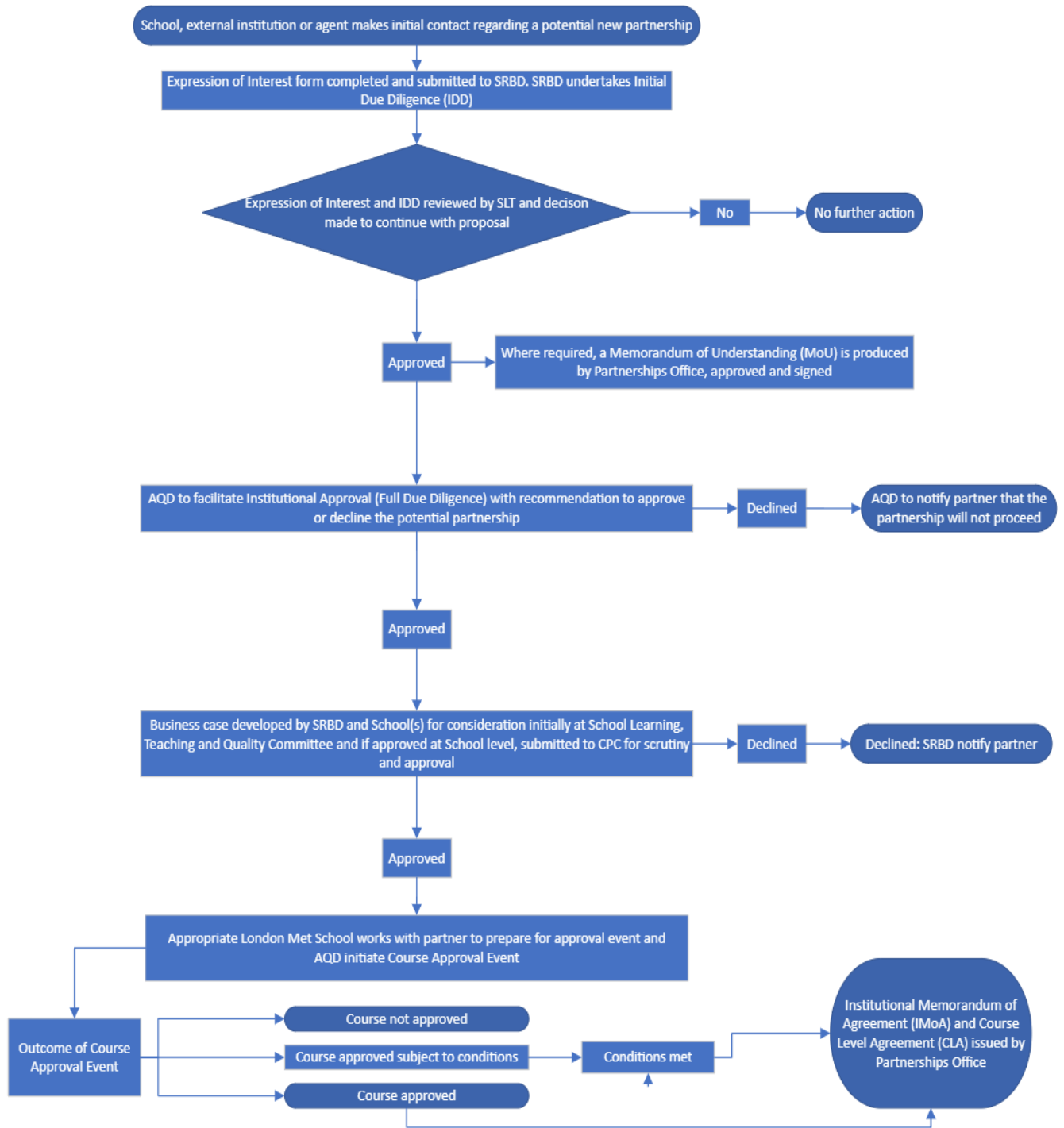
## **26. Deletion of Collaborative Courses**

26.1 During the lifetime of a partnership, either party may decide to delete one or more courses. This could be due to a number of reasons, for example in response to low student recruitment numbers, or in response to sector demand. In agreeing to delete the provision, the courses will cease to be marketed and recruited to and the contractual clauses relating to teach out will be invoked.

26.2 Where it is proposed by either party that one or more collaborative courses will be deleted, but the partnership will continue, the Course Closure process should be followed using the [Course Closure / Suspension Form](#).

26.3 In the event of a partner course deletion, the appropriate London Met School will be work with the partner to draw up a [Collaborative Course Closure Action Plan \(AQDC017\)](#) which will be regularly monitored by CPC until all registered students are completed.

# Flowchart 1: The Process of Approving a New Collaborative Partner



## Flowchart 2: The Process of Approving an Existing Collaborative Partner to Develop Additional New Courses

