Guidance BG (viii)

Preparing a Collaborative Partner Contingency Plan

# Introduction

1. The University has an obligation to students admitted to programmes under its awarding authority; this includes provision that leads to an award of the University that is delivered by an approved partner of the University.
2. Registration with the Office for Students (OfS) requires providers to have in force a Student Protection Plan which sets out the actions that the provider will take to minimise any impact on the students’ continuation of study should the provider discontinue the course, subject, discipline or exit the market completely. Providers are required to commit to taking all reasonable steps to comply with the provisions of the plan. Given the real and perceived risks associated with collaborative provision, collaborative partner contingency plans are required to be developed as part of the initial due diligence of a potential new partner and should set out the arrangements that the University would put in place were a collaborative provider unable to complete delivery of a KU award.
3. The University has in place existing processes for when either the University or a partner decides to withdraw from or terminate an arrangement. These processes are designed to protect the academic interests of students studying on, or who have applied to study on a programme. These situations are usually controlled and in most instances the partner will ‘teach-out’ the KU programme such that all registered students can complete their programme of study. There are however situations when a partner is not able to complete delivery of a programme and include for example insolvency, de-regulation by a government body, loss of UKVI licence, sudden loss of a contract which would mean that the partner is unable to continue to offer a KU award.

# Purpose

1. Collaborative Programme Contingency Plans (hereafter Contingency Plans) are designed to protect the interests of students on collaborative programmes delivered by partners unable to continue to offer KU awards and describe how the University will ensure that the affected students can complete an identical or similar University award. Thus, Contingency Plans allow the University to meet its contractual obligations to enrolled students by putting in place measures that would ensure that all students enrolled with the University are able to graduate with an appropriate University award.

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# Process

1. As part of the initial due diligence process the sponsoring faculty, in consultation with QAE, should draw up a Contingency Plan for the provision proposed to be delivered by the potential partner, using Template B13.
2. The template requires the allocation of a risk assessment to the provision which should be based on the following:
* Type of provision (e.g., franchise or validated) (see Appendix A)
* The subject and whether similar or associated provision is delivered at KU (for validated provision)
* Duration of the course
* Geographical location of the partner
* Type of partner (i.e., small private provider, large FEC, overseas partner etc.)
* Whether other KU partners offered the same or similar programmes
1. The nature of the Contingency Plan should then be agreed for each of the following scenarios:
* Scenario 1 = Where the partner ceases trading at short notice
* Scenario 2 = Where the University decides to terminate the partnership
* Scenario 3 = Where the Partner decides to terminate the partnership with the University AND due to exceptional circumstances is unable to teach-out current students

8. The Contingency Plan for each scenario should be selected, listing all those that apply for each scenario:

1. Students will transfer to the University;
2. The University will make arrangements to teach students through flying faculty and/or appointment of additional staff in local temporary premises;
3. The University will provide a programme totally through distance education. (This option will normally only apply to programmes already substantially delivered through distance education);
4. Students will transfer to another KU “contingency” partner offering the same or similar KU award;
5. The University will make arrangements for another HEI to teach the programme (as a KU programme);
6. The University will provide a replacement programme through a combination of the contingency scenarios listed above;
7. Students will transfer within partner;
8. Transfer to the award of another HEI (only ever used as a last resort when all other routes have been considered and deemed non-viable.

9. Where there is a need for dialogue with other providers for example about the potential transfer of students, there should have been high level discussions that provide some evidence that the plan is feasible and not merely theoretical. The QAE team will provide assistance.

10. The Contingency Plan should be submitted to QAE as part of the due diligence evidence.

11. Contingency plans must be reviewed and reaffirmed annually via the Executive Committee.

12. QAE will keep copies of the most recently agreed Contingency Plans for all collaborative programmes and will report on the status of contingency plans in the annual report on Collaborative Partnerships to the Education Committee.

**Annex A**

# Types of Partnerships

**The University’s relationships with collaborative partners currently fall into the following groups:**

1. Collaborative courses within the University’s HESES population (the University is responsible for providing licensed access to e-resources).
2. Collaborative courses returned within the collaborative partner’s own survey (HESES, HEIFES, HEAPES2) population, and therefore “the instance is not being returned on any other institution’s HESES, HEIFES or HEAPES survey return for that year of instance” (HESES13 Annex F, paragraph 3c).
3. Collaborative courses offered at private partners in the UK where students pay the full fee but are not eligible for student loans and are not included in any statutory surveys such as HESES, HEIFES or HEAPES.
4. International students on courses taught at a collaborative partner based overseas and included in the University’s HESES population as non-funded.
5. International students on courses taught at a collaborative partner based overseas and not included in the University’s HESES population.