# Guidance BG(i)

# The Role of the Liaison Officer

1. Every collaboration is unique. It is for this reason that the liaison officer role is so essential for a successful partnership and that this role will vary across the collaborative provision of the University. A non-exhaustive list of factors that impact on the nature of liaison is:

* Size of the provision and extent of programmes on the schedule.
* National or International.
* Educational institute or commercial organisation, and
* Franchise or validation or joint approach.

1. Communication is at the heart of the liaison role. Collaborative Provision requires multiple contacts between appropriate members of each partner. The liaison officer is not expected to carry responsibility for the completion of all activities, judgements and decisions required of a successful collaborative partnership. However, the liaison officers are the key contacts, and should facilitate communication between the two organisations.
2. There are two identified general functions of liaison:

* Developmental liaison
* Operational liaison

1. The qualities demanded of these two functions vary considerably and faculties might find that the appointment of different members of staff to each role is preferable. This is not, however, a requirement and in many cases the two functions will be covered by the same member of staff. Where different members of staff assume the roles, an essential responsibility of the development liaison officer will be to mentor the operational liaison officer.
2. A developmental liaison officer should be identified during the early negotiations of the proposed provision and before the proposal is formalised on an A2b form.
3. There are three liaison phases identified associated to this division of liaison role:

* Development
* Transition
* Operation

## Developmental liaison

1. This period begins as soon as the faculty and the potential partner have made concrete steps towards developing some form of shared provision. The earliest responsibilities of this role would include discussing the standard requirements of the institutional agreement and the Kingston University quality assurance processes and regulations. It is expected that the developmental liaison officer will have input into the production of the A2b form, will assume a central role in the Curriculum Development process, and oversee the process of document production for validation.
2. The main responsibilities of the developmental liaison officer are:

* introducing partner staff to quality assurance processes
* advising on curriculum design
* providing guidance and help in the production of course documentation
* preliminary staff development that introduces the KU cyclical processes
* mentoring the operation liaison officers
* co-ordinating contract negotiations as necessary

1. The extent of the work associated with this period will depend on the level of experience of the partner. Partners should identify staff members who assume responsibilities associated with these activities in their organisation. Inevitably development liaison will often involve Kingston University supporting and guiding partner staff. However, an identified member at the partner to assume a coordinating role will facilitate this process. Similarly, this role at the partner may well be better suited to a different person than the ongoing role of operational liaison officer.
2. The validation event stands as the culmination of this phase.

## Transition

1. The transition phase begins at validation and goes through to the recruitment of the first cohort.
2. It is recommended that the operation liaison officer is identified and appointed by the time of validation to allow their mentoring by the developmental liaison officer (unless it is decided the same person will undertake both roles), and so that the information emerging from discussions at validation is directly available to them.
3. The transition phase is marked by a shift from producing programme and liaison documentation to preparing for delivery to the first intake. For instance:

* finalising the process of admissions and the levels of authority;
* setting the calendar for the first year of activity (in relation to this it is recommended that times, albeit provisional at this stage, for contact between the operational liaison officers are included);
* staff development events set up for partner staff focussing on the KU assessment and quality assurance processes;
* consideration of the learning, teaching and assessment strategies outlined in the course documentation;
* mentoring of the operational liaison officers;
* finalisation of the contract and signing off.

1. At the culmination of the transition phase an executive committee should be arranged (unique agenda – see Guidance BG(iii)).

## Operational liaison officer phase

1. The Operational Liaison Officer (henceforth, the Liaison Officer) has responsibility for the day-to-day, course-level liaison with the collaborative partner for a particular collaborative arrangement. For every collaborative arrangement, there will normally be a Kingston University Liaison Officer (ULO) and a Partner Liaison Officer (PLO) who will work closely together on the operation of the collaborative arrangement. The overarching function of the LOs is communication. It is noted that the LO is not responsible for standards and quality which are delivered through the embedding of systems and practices devised by the University (or validated by the University). The LO is primarily in place to facilitate these systems and report on issues that might be obstructing their implementation to appropriate accountable officers.

The University Liaison Officer (ULO)

1. The ULO needs to have a good understanding of University regulations and quality assurance processes, and appropriate subject expertise in relation to the course delivered by the partner institution. The Liaison Officer should have an overview of the programme, act as the first point of contact within the University in relation to the collaboration and liaise with the Partner Liaison Officer on day-to-day matters to ensure the smooth running of the collaborative course.

The Partner Liaison Officer (PLO)

1. The PLO is the main point of contact for the University Liaison Officer and as such plays a key role in ensuring that the University Liaison Officer is kept informed of issues relating to the course. The PLO also plays an important role in ensuring that necessary information is made available to the ULO (for example, enrolment information, samples of student work, assessment marks etc.), and for ensuring in general that the partnership runs smoothly.
2. The liaison officer responsibilities will include:

* Process monitoring to ensure things are timetabled and going ahead;
* SVC, student rep system, assessment processes, Personal Tutor Scheme etc.
* Monitor admissions including all RPL and oversee transition in 2+1 (or similar) agreements
* Check marketing documents and web presence
* Collate staff development needs and report these appropriately
* Monitor the mark ratification process for the assessment boards and raise issues to appropriate staff
* Conduit for communicating in-year changes to processes and regulations
* Advise and monitor moderation and on-line assessment and use of VLE
* Where relevant, advise and monitor work placements and employability opportunities and conduit to coordinate wider communication – module leader to module leader, role of course leader, administration, etc.
* Overview of course modifications: front line advice and link with QA bodies in faculty
* Support role in review process
* First port of call for compliance queries (PSRB, OfS, UK Visa and Immigration).

The “Checklist for Liaison Officers”

1. Below, lists some of the key responsibilities associated with this role. Collaborative partnerships vary in their size and complexity, and therefore the list below is not meant to be exhaustive and should not preclude additional responsibilities being laid down in the Liaison Document (see AQSH Guidance BG(ii)) for the particular partnership. It should, however, give an indication as to the types of responsibilities required by the role, and act as a useful aide memoire for Liaison Officers in managing collaborative partnerships.
2. It is also noted that in some instances, particularly where large and complex collaborative arrangements are involved, it is beneficial to have a dedicated administrative member of staff to assist the Liaison Officer with certain administrative tasks. In practice, therefore, some of the items on the checklist may be delegated to other staff.

## Further information

1. For more information about the University’s quality assurance processes, please refer to the [Academic Quality and Standards Handbook](http://www.kingston.ac.uk/aboutkingstonuniversity/howtheuniversityworks/policiesandregulations/academic-quality-and-standards/) or contact Quality Assurance and Enhancement.

## CHECKLIST FOR LIAISION OFFICERS

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **ULO** | **PLO** |
| **At the start of the academic year** | **At the start of the academic year** |
| Meet with partner counterpart to discuss operational issues for the coming year, to clarify roles and responsibilities for different areas and to agree attendance at meetings relating to the collaboration.  Arrange the annual calendar, including:   * Student Voice Committee (twice a year) * Joint Executive Committee (once a year) * Quality assurance committees * Assessment Boards   And agree venue and attendance. Ensure that the annual programme of committees allows flow through of information, for instance the SVC and that KU parent boards (if applicable) and quality committees can consider recommendations. | Meet with partner counterpart to discuss operational issues for the coming year, to clarify roles and responsibilities for different areas and to agree attendance at meetings relating to the collaboration.  Arrange the annual calendar, including:   * Student Voice Committee (twice a year) * Joint Executive Committee (once a year) * Quality assurance committees * Assessment Boards   And agree venue and attendance. Ensure that the annual programme of committees allows flow through of information, for instance the SVC and KU parent boards (if applicable) and quality committees can consider recommendations. |
| Ensure that the Partner Liaison Officer has access to StaffSpace and Canvas. |  |
| Are induction arrangements in place for new entrants to the course? | Oversee the local induction arrangements for students |
| Make any necessary changes to the Liaison Document to reflect how the collaboration will operate in the forthcoming year | Check the updates to the liaison document to a) ensure accuracy and b) communicate changes to relevant staff at the partner |
| Ensure that the partner has received and understands the changes in University-level regulations and QA policies which will have been communicated to the partner via Quality Assurance and Enhancement | Ensure that relevant staff at the partner are aware of the relevant changes in University regulations and policies related to their role |
| Have admission procedures been carried  out according to the relevant policies and procedures? | Have admission procedures been carried  out according to the relevant policies and procedures? |
| Check with PLO that students are in receipt of all key documentation | Have students been provided with key documentation such as their timetable, student handbook, programme specification, module guides etc? |
| Have students been registered with  the University and have access to  Canvas? | Confirm with students that they have appropriate access to Canvas |
| Oversee the selection of course representatives at the partner and act as link with the Union of Kingston Students to ensure training opportunities have been offered | Have course representatives been identified? |
| Are arrangements in place to ensure that draft assessments can be considered by the External Examiners? | Are arrangements in place to ensure that draft assessments can be considered by the External Examiners? |
| **Throughout the year:** | **Throughout the year:** |
| Attend committees as agreed in the diary | Attend committees as agreed in the diary |
| Are appropriate arrangements for assessment boards in place? | Are appropriate arrangements for assessment boards in place? |
| Ensure issues are dealt with directly when falling within the remit of the ULO, or reported to appropriate University officers and/or the Joint Executive Committee | Report issues that arise during the year and require action to ULO |
| Have external examiners’ reports been forwarded to the partner, and has the faculty provided a response to the external examiners, in liaison with the partner? |  |
|  | Have early module reviews taken place? |
| Ensure that examinations are compatible with in-house times and across the consortium (where relevant) | Are appropriate arrangements for examinations in place? |
| Have any proposals for changes to the course or modules been forwarded to the Course and Module Modification Panel, or, if required, to the University? (see section G of the AQSH) | Proposal for changes to the course (validated) have been submitted correctly. |
| Is assessment of an appropriate nature, quality and standard, and is it presented in the correct format ?   * If this is a franchise arrangement, are the same assessments used across the franchise? | Ensure that assessments are available for the ULO (and EE) for checking |
| Has appropriate moderation of student work taken place? | Ensure arrangements are in place for appropriate moderation. Ensure relevant staff are familiar with KU moderation policy |
| Have CVs of any new partner staff teaching on the course been forwarded to the Faculty for approval at the Executive Committee? *(note: where the timing of the Executive Committee does not fit with the recruitment timescales, the PLO should send the CVs of the candidates to the ULO for comment prior to interviews taking place)* | The ULO may feed comments on CVs of individuals shortlisted by the partner for interview (where that member of staff will be teaching on KU provision). The responsibility for appointment lies ultimately with the partner and there is no requirement for faculty staff to be on the appointment panel, although where feasible this may be helpful. |
| Are there any staff development needs that you have identified at the partner, and have you made the necessary arrangements for this?  Report to appropriate KU officers as required. | Identify staff development needs |
| Have the module folders been kept up to date? | Ensure local module folders are being kept up to date. |
| Have you checked and approved the publicity material relating to the course? | Ensure the publicity materials for the course(s) are accurate. |
| Have Module Enhancement Plans (MEP) been completed? |  |
|  | Has student feedback been collected (e.g: via the Student Voice Committee)? |
| Have Module Evaluation Questionnaires (MEQs) been completed by students studying in the partnership? | Have the results of MEQs been considered, an action plan developed and feedback provided to students? (see section L) |
| Have you considered the comparability of data across the consortium (e.g. student performance and success)? |  |
| Has the Course Enhancement Plan (CEP) been completed at the end of the Academic Year (around June) to enable confirmation from HoS that all MEPs and CEPs have been completed? | Has the Course Enhancement Plan (CEP) been completed at the end of the Academic Year (around June) to enable confirmation from HoS that all MEPs and CEPs have been completed? |