



Polasaí agus Nósanna Imeachta/Policies and Procedures

Code	QA246
Title	Collaborative Partnerships for Taught Awards
Policy Owner	Deputy President & Registrar
Date	12 th October 2023
Approved By	Academic Council Standing Committee

1.0 Purpose

Approval and review of collaborative partnerships that lead to University of Galway taught awards.

2.0 Definitions

Collaborative partnerships for taught awards are formal agreements with third party organisations for the design and/or delivery of taught programmes that lead to University of Galway awards. These types of collaborative partnerships include:

- **A progression agreement** is a contract between University of Galway and an awarding body which states the conditions under which University of Galway will accept students onto the start of a programme.
- **An articulation agreement** permits advanced entry to University of Galway programmes after completion of some part, or all, of another provider's qualification.
- **A dual or multiple award** is where two or more awarding bodies collaborate in the delivery of a jointly delivered programme(s) leading to separate awards (and separate certification) being granted by each awarding body.
- **A joint award** is where two or more awarding bodies collaborate in the delivery of a jointly delivered programme leading to a single award and single certificate.
- **Off-campus programme** leads to a University of Galway award delivered in-person in the partner(s) institution or organisation.
- **A linked provider** is a legally independent organisation registered and operating within the Republic of Ireland with its own internal QA policies and procedures where University of Galway has agreed to credit the award.

3.0 Minimum credits required to gain a University of Galway Award

3.1 Minimum Credit required to gain a University of Galway undergraduate award

At a minimum, the student must undertake 25% of University of Galway credit towards a University of Galway undergraduate award, normally the final year of the programme¹.

The classification of the award would have to be identified as part of the Agreement (see section 4.4 below).

3.2 Minimum Credit to gain a University of Galway Postgraduate award

¹ In exceptional circumstances, generally related to the requirements of partners or programme prerequisites, where the calibre of the collaboration is of particular significance, the University of Galway component of the degree might be in a year other than final year. In all such cases, the relevant Executive Dean of College should approve the structure of the programme prior to submission to University Curriculum & Programme Board.



At a minimum the student must undertake one semester (or one third of the whole programme) of University of Galway credit towards a 90 ECTS University of Galway postgraduate award. In the case where the postgraduate award is 60 ECTS the minimum should be 50%.

4.0 Stages for approval and review of collaborative partnerships for taught awards

4.1 Confirm type of partnership and process

The initiation and development of these collaborative partnerships will depend upon the type of agreement or award being proposed. When considering such a collaborative partnership, the decision tree in Appendix 1 should be used to determine the process required.

The guidance and templates for each Stage below can be accessed via the [International Office Sharepoint](#). Each Stage has an approval point. The approval process aligns with [QA050 Curriculum Design and Management Policy](#). For a Progression Agreement only Stage 3 below should apply.

4.2 Partnership Initiation: Stage 1

This takes place at an early point in a potential partnership development. It allows a School or College to decide whether to invest further resource into a potential partnership by providing a high level view of the strategic fit, reputation and risks associated with a potential collaborating institution or organisation.

The approval point for each type of collaborative partnership for taught award is at School or College-level, as defined by the College.

4.3 Academic and Business Justification: Stage 2

This stage requires the following where the extent of each is set out in the Process for the type of partnership being considered:

- An academic model
- Curriculum mapping
- Due diligence
- Risk assessment
- Business model (including resources and finance)
- The relevant QA050 Curriculum Design & Management form(s).

In drawing up the above, consultation is required with key Office holders as designated in the Guidance and Process document for each type of partnership.

The approval point is set out in QA050 Curriculum Design & Management.

4.4 Agreement: Stage 3

An agreement is drawn up and signed with the collaborating institution(s) or organisation(s). This will define the responsibilities of each party. For progression agreements and articulation partnerships, the agreement is likely to be a Memorandum of Understanding. For other types of collaborative partnership (as defined in Section 2) a formal, legally binding agreement would be needed.

All collaborative partnership taught award agreements must be stored in a central repository maintained by the International Office including details of the partner, duration and renewal date accessible to University of Galway staff. The repository should include an electronic copy of each signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and/or Agreement accessible by the Quality Office, International Office and Legal Services.



4.5 Monitoring and Review: Stage 4

Each partnership should be reviewed and monitored by the School as set out in the Partnership Agreement to ensure that the agreed terms and conditions are being complied with and it is delivering the expected outcomes. At minimum this should be carried out 1 year before the agreement renewal date.

Where a collaborative partnership for taught award is subject to the programme approval process (**QA050 Curriculum Design and Management Policy**), the review would be at least once every seven years by the School and Programme Board within University of Galway except those defined as Linked Providers (see below). Schools may follow the review process outlined in the policy: [QA006 Review of Taught Programmes](#). The Quality Office is available for consultation and other assistance in conducting the review.

Collaborative partnerships defined as **Linked Providers** must be reviewed by the Quality Office in consultation with the Programme Board(s) as set out in the policy: [QA009 Review of Linked Providers](#).

Collaborative partnerships involving more than one taught programme may be reviewed by Programme Directors and other representatives within the School, College or University in addition to an independent review described above. The Quality Office is available for consultation and other assistance in conducting such a review.

4.6 Additional guidelines

The guidance and procedures above conform with national policy and guidance.

- *“Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards”* (QQI, 2012).
- *“Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision”* (IHEQN, 2013) – with guidelines on developing MOU/MOA’s.
- *“Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012”*.



5.0 Responsibilities

Name	Responsibility
Deputy President & Registrar	Policy owner
College, School or Programme Board	Initiating and developing collaborative partnership agreements for taught awards, implementing the agreements and review other than Linked Providers
International Office (Global Partnerships Team)	Maintaining the repository of Partnerships agreements
Quality Office	Periodic review of Linked Providers. Annual reporting on existing collaborative partnerships for taught awards to QQI
Collaborative Partner	Compliance with University of Galway Policies and Procedures including external standards and guidelines

Visit the [P&P Repository](#) on the **Quality Office web site** for other policies, procedures, regulations and guidelines



Appendix A

Decision Tree: Type of Collaborative Taught Award Partnerships

