



Collaborative Provision Policy

**Scope:**

This policy applies to all credit and award bearing collaborative provision (partnership and validation activity) at City St George's, University of London.

Senate Regulations:

Regulation 6: Collaborative Provision

Summary:

Policy describing the University's approach to credit- and award-bearing partnership provision and validation agreements including information on the criteria for considering partnership proposals and the process of approval.

Date approved/re-approved:

November 2017, updated Summer 2025

Date for review:

2026/27

Effective from:

2025/26

To be read in conjunction with:

[Quality Manual — Partnership Provision](#)

[Collaborative Provision Typology](#)

[Register of Collaborative Provision](#)

Equality and Diversity Statement

City St George's, University of London is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all its activities, processes, and culture, under its Public Sector Equality Duties and the Equality Act 2010. This includes promoting equality and diversity for all, irrespective of any protected characteristic, working pattern, family circumstance, socio-economic background, political belief or other irrelevant distinction.

Where relevant to the policy, decision-making panels will ensure a reasonable gender balance (with at least one man and one woman) and will actively consider representation of other protected groups.

Introduction

This policy applies to partnerships involving provision which leads to a City St George's, University of London award or that leads to admission to one of the University's programmes, whether or not this is with advanced standing. There is a separate Policy on Collaborative Provision (Senate Regulation 6) which is available from the University's website and which sets out the terms of reference for the Committees providing central approval of partnerships: University Strategic Partnership Approval and Review Committee (USPARC) and Collaborative Provision Committee (CPC).

Partnerships include joint programmes, articulation arrangements, franchised provision and off-site delivery of City St Georges, University of London programmes. The University has a [typology](#) which defines current collaborative provision (categorised by partnership type) and its key characteristics. Validation is the process by which the University recognises as equivalent to its own the quality and standards of programmes designed, delivered and managed by another institution. Successful students receive an award from City St George's, University of London in accordance with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications. Through validation, the University takes ultimate responsibility for the quality and standards of the validated programmes.

For all types of collaborative provision, including partnerships and validations, the University will establish that the quality and standards of any programme involving its credit or award are no less rigorous than those applied to programme offered internally so as to meet national Office for Students and international Higher Education requirements.

Purpose of Collaborative Provision

The University cites the creation of high-quality partnerships and collaborations worldwide as key to developing its international reputation in the University's Vision and Strategy 2030. The University recognises there are risks involved with partnership provision and has enhanced its institutional framework for managing partnership provision in response to this.

The University's prime objective in forming validation relationships is to enable the development of academic links with a range of institutions which do not have Degree-Awarding Powers, thereby furthering our academic base and the awards made in our name. Through undertaking validation, the University also aims to widen its reputation and to enter into other forms of collaboration. The University only enters into a validation relationship where there is evidence that it will be of strategic benefit.

Approach to Collaborative Provision

Our approach to partnerships is under-pinned by the following principles:

- The University is responsible for the academic standards of all awards granted in its name. The academic standards of awards developed and delivered through partnership arrangements are equivalent to those delivered solely by the University.
- All partnership proposals should demonstrate compatibility with the University's business imperative, the proposed financial benefit of the partnership and possibility for growth opportunities.

- Validated partner institutions will be high profile in their discipline/s and will reflect the University's focus on academic excellence and professional education. Validation is only undertaken where we have the appropriate expertise and resource to enable us to undertake our responsibilities for quality, standards and wider educational dialogue; this is always supplemented by external input in accordance with our Quality Assurance Framework.
- The University is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the quality of learning opportunities offered through a partnership are at an appropriate level to enable the student to achieve the academic standards required for the award
- All new partnership proposals will go through a Stage 0 and Stage A (USPARC) approval process to enable the University to take a view on how new proposals might fit with institutional objectives, how they might be of educational benefit and to assure the University that provision offered will be of a sufficient standard. Final institutional approval is provided by CPC.
- All partnership provision is under-pinned by a Memorandum of Agreement or equivalent, clearly setting out the responsibilities and obligations of the University and the partner institution.
- All partnership provision is to be fully costed with financial arrangements set out in the Memorandum of Agreement.
- In no circumstances is a partner institution permitted to engage in a 'serial arrangement' whereby the partner offers approved provision elsewhere through and arrangement of its own. A validation relationship will only be formed whereby the University will be, or will become the sole validating body, so as to support the development of the relationship.
- The University undertakes to ensure that staff engaged in delivering or supporting partnership activity are suitably qualified for the role they will perform.
- The University requires that admissions be managed in accordance with the University's Policy and requirements. The admission criteria are set out in programme specifications. The responsibility for managing admission is agreed and articulated in the Memorandum of Agreement.
- All publicity material generated by the partner organisation in connection with the partnership activity is subject to initial approval and periodic checks by the University to ensure accuracy and currency.
- The Memorandum of Agreement sets out provision for termination of the partnership agreement. The University will make arrangements to safeguard the best interests of students during the termination period. The Validation Agreement sets out provision for termination of a validation arrangement.

Criteria for Considering Collaborative Provision Proposals

In addition to satisfying these principles, the University will also take into account the following criteria when considering requests for Collaborative Provision:

- the compatibility and complementarity of the mission and strategic plan of the University, including current and planned academic activities and those of the prospective partner;
- the legal status of the prospective partner and its capacity to contract with the University, along with the commitment and support of its governing body (or equivalent) for the arrangement;
- whether the ethos and environment for teaching and learning are appropriate to the University's approach to partnerships and more generally to UK Higher Education;
- the financial stability of the prospective partner and its ability and commitment to provide the resources appropriate to support the proposed programmes and a partnership with the University;
- the academic viability of the programme involving partnership provision and the resources required by both parties to maintain a successful partnership;
- whether appropriate governance, resources and systems are in place for the effective management of the programme and, in particular, to underpin academic standards, quality assurance and enhancement. This will include the expertise of staff to teach the proposed programme both in terms of discipline and level;
- the University's ability to provide for the foreseeable future academic staff with relevant expertise to lead the activity and contribute to academic developments on behalf of the University;
- the comparability of the student experience to that for internal provision; and
- the potential for creating wider opportunities for the University from developing the partnership;

Process for Considering Proposals and Establishing a Relationship with a Partner

The Vice Presidents of Education and Enterprise, Engagement & Employability are responsible for considering all new partnership proposals through a Stage 0 process, which ensures strategic fit of proposals with the University and aims to minimise potential risk. It also provides Schools and the University with the opportunity to consider a range of issues relevant to partnership provision prior to programme approval and the drafting of a Memorandum of Agreement. Each proposal requires approval by the relevant Dean of School and Vice President sign-off for any partnership proposal involving an international element. For proposals representing a higher risk, Senior Leadership Team approval will also be required, for example for mergers, collaborations or operations requiring the University to have a physical presence in another jurisdiction (e.g. through branch or representative offices) and/or proposals based in Category A or Category B high risk jurisdictions.

Any approach for validation is received in the first instance by the Academic Director (Collaborative Provision) who will consult with the Dean of the cognate School/s of the University to consider the academic fit of the proposal and potential academic leadership for the activity. Where it is agreed that the approach should be pursued in principle, the Vice President (Education) is responsible for considering the proposal which will be prepared by Academic Services in conjunction with the Academic Director (Collaborative Provision) via the Stage 0 IEF form. Where this proposal is approved, the process will progress to a review

of institutional infrastructure and due diligence to be presented to USPARC. Where this is successful, the process will then proceed to detailed consideration of programmes to be presented to CPC. In undertaking this process, the University will consider existing or previous links that the prospective validation partner may have and reserves the right to seek views directly from such bodies. Programmes are validated for a fixed period of time. The University will undertake a full review of the validated programme/s through a revalidation process with a view to making a recommendation for a further period of validation where this is appropriate. Validation partner programmes also participate in Annual Programme Evaluations (APEs).

Where a proposal is approved, the programme involving international partnership provision then requires USPARC scrutiny and CPC approval.

Status of the Partner Institution

Following completion of the initial approval process for the partnership, a Memorandum of Understanding, or in the case of validated partners, a Validation Agreement, can be drawn up in collaboration with the partner institution that will document the respective roles and responsibilities. These will vary depending on the nature of the provision and are set out in the [Collaborative Provision Typology](#).

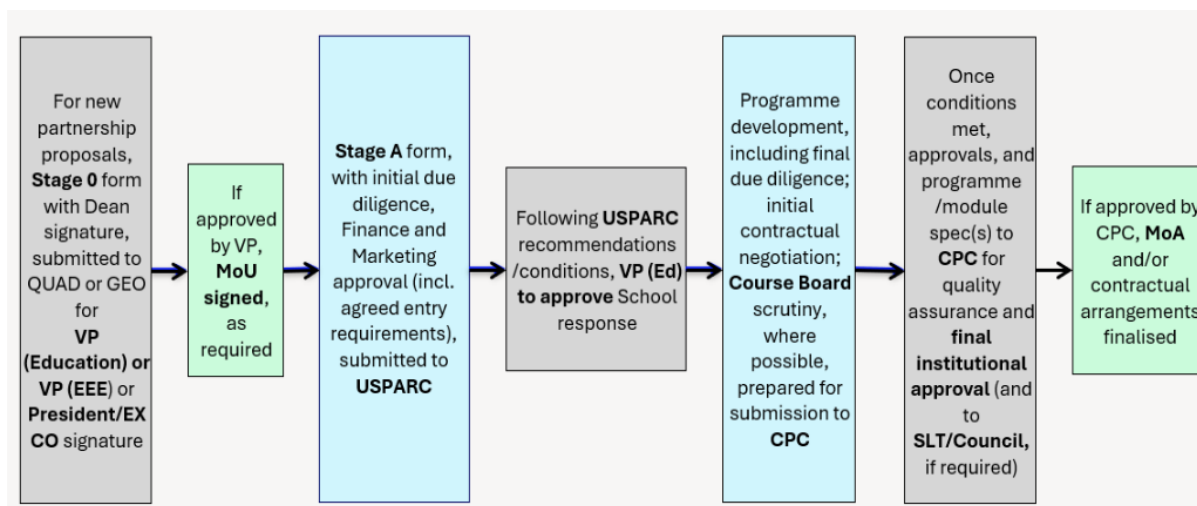
In forming a validation relationship, the validation partner, as an organisation, remains legally independent from the University. The validation partner is responsible for the organisational governance and management of the institution, including matters relating to finance. The University will expect validated programmes to be managed and delivered in accordance with University academic policies and practices. In some instances, the overall governance and management of the validation partner will have a bearing on the delivery of the validated programmes and the University will need to be consulted accordingly. Where the University considers such matters could threaten the quality and standards of validated provision, it will consider whether or not to continue with the relationship.

Status of Students on Collaborative Provision Programmes

The Memorandum of Agreement will state the facilities of the University which students are entitled to access. These will vary depending on the nature of the provision. Students receive information about their rights (e.g. access to appeals and complaints procedures and learning support resources) through their programme handbook. The programme handbook also specifies the nature of the partnership and the resultant outcome for successful students (e.g. admission to a City St George's, University of London programme or a joint award).

Students on programmes validated by City St George's, University of London are registered with the validation partner which is responsible for the delivery and management of the provision. Students register with the University to enable access to the designated services available under the Validation Agreement, and for records to be established and maintained on their overall academic progress and potential award. On successful completion of the award, students become alumni of City St George's, University of London as well as of the institution at which they studied their programme.

Approvals Process for Collaborative Provision Proposals



The approval of new collaborative provision partnerships follows a structured and staged process to ensure due diligence, quality assurance, and institutional oversight.

Stage 0 Proposal

A Stage 0 Initial Evaluation Form is completed for all new partnership proposals. This is available to download from <https://staffhub.city.ac.uk/academic-services/policies-and-guidance/quality-manual/partnership-provision>. This form requires the Dean's signature and submission to QUAD (for UK based partnerships) or the Global Engagement Office (for international partnerships). Sign-off from the Vice-President (Education), the Vice-President (Enterprise, Engagement & Development), or the President/Executive Chair, as appropriate will be arranged once all other sections of the form are completed. Where required, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) may be signed following VP approval.

Stage A Submission

The proposal then progresses to the Stage A form, which includes initial due diligence, Finance and Marketing approval (including agreed entry requirements) and can also be downloaded from <https://staffhub.city.ac.uk/academic-services/policies-and-guidance/quality-manual/partnership-provision>. This is submitted for consideration by the University's Strategic Partnerships and Risk Committee (USPARC).

USPARC Review

Following USPARC's review, recommendations and any conditions are issued. The Vice-President (Education) subsequently approves the School's formal response to these conditions. Timeframes for completion will be set.

Programme Development

Subject to approval, programme development begins. This includes final due diligence, initial contractual negotiations, and scrutiny by the relevant Course Board or Programme Management Board, where appropriate. At this stage, the programme (including module and/or programme specifications) is prepared for submission to the Collaborative Provision Committee (CPC).

CPC Approval

CPC considers the proposal for quality assurance and institutional approval. Where required, for example if the proposed partnership is situated in a high-risk jurisdiction, the proposal may also be referred to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) for final approval.

Finalisation

Once all conditions are met and approvals secured, the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) and any associated contractual arrangements are finalised.

Partnerships and Collaborative Provision: Typology of Risk

Council approval required:

- Mergers
- Incorporations (i.e. new companies or other corporate vehicles)
- Major institutional alliances
- Changes to the corporate structure of the University
- Branch campuses
- Collaborations or operations requiring the University to have a physical presence in another jurisdiction (e.g. through branch or representative offices)

President's approval required, on the advice of SLT:

- All of the above
- Collaborative activities in any high risk jurisdictions:
 - Category A (highest risk from a national security perspective): Russia, Iran, China
 - Category B (other UK-sanctioned jurisdictions): those countries listed on the UK sanctions list (a further 18 countries, at present)
- Collaborative activities in a new jurisdiction in which the University has not previously been active
- Franchises
- Validations
- Joint Awards

Senate sub-committee approval required:

- All of the above
- Dual Awards
- External accreditations
- Articulations
- Progression agreements
- Short courses
- CPD

Previous Policy Title(s)	
Partnerships Policy Validation Policy	
Policy Enabling Owner and Department	Responsible for Implementation and Department
QUAD, Academic Services	Academic Services
Approving Body	Date of Approval
Senate	May 2017
Last Reviewed & Version	Review Due Date
Summer 2025	2025/26
Publication of Policy (<i>tick as appropriate</i>)	
For public access online (internet)? <input type="checkbox"/>	For staff access only (intranet)? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Website Link:	Intranet Link: https://staffhub.city.ac.uk/academic-services/policies-and-guidance/quality-manual/partnership-provision
Storage of Policy (<i>Previous versions of the policy must be stored in the drive by the author</i>)	
Drive Address: ..\..\..\10. Partnership Provision	
Queries about this policy should be referred to	
QUAD@citystgeorges.ac.uk	