UCEM Code of Practice

Partnerships

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Table of Contents

1.   Introduction

This Code of Practice chapter sets out the scope of UCEM's approach to partnerships for teaching collaborations. It draws upon the Expectations and Core and Common practices from the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education (opens new window) and the QAA Advice and Guidance on Partnerships, including the core practice 'where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has 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'.

2.   Definitions

2.1 Partnerships

Partnerships are defined as 'an arrangement between two or more organisations to deliver aspects of teaching, learning, assessment, and student support. It refers to collaborative arrangements involving students and/or award which include those involving guaranteed progression and sharing of services. Partnership arrangements may apply to the delivery of whole courses of study or to elements of courses, individual modules, or self-contained components of study. Alternative sites and contexts of learning or assessment, or specialist support, resources, or facilities for learning, may be provided, for example, by organisations offering work-based or placement learning opportunities, or employers supporting employees on higher education courses where the workplace is used as a learning environment. They may operate either within the UK or transnationally and include, for example, different modes of delivery such as online, validation arrangements, franchised courses, branch campuses, multiple awards, apprenticeships, and provision by 'embedded colleges' of integrated foundation courses' (QAA, 2018, p1).

2.2 Partner

A partner is a 'provider delivering aspects of teaching, learning, assessment or student support under delegated authority of the 'awarding organisation'' (QAA, 2018, p1).

2.3 Validated

A programme that is designed, developed, and approved by either UCEM or by a partner that is delivered in full or in part, by either UCEM or an approved partner institution. Students studying on the programme will normally have a direct contractual relationship with the partner that delivers the course as opposed to with the validating institution.

2.4 Progression agreement

A progression agreement is an 'arrangement whereby students who have completed a programme at one organisation successfully may be considered for entry (on an individual basis) either to the beginning, or to a more advanced stage, of a programme of the degree-awarding body' (QAA, p41).

2.5 Articulation agreement

An articulation agreement is 'a process whereby all students who satisfy academic criteria on one programme are automatically entitled (on academic grounds) to be admitted with advanced standing to a subsequent stage of a programme of a degree-awarding body.

These arrangements, which are subject to formal agreements between parties, normally involve credit accumulation and transfer, so that credit achieved for the approved study at the first provider is transferred to contribute to the programme and award completed at the second (the degree-awarding body).

The two separate components are the responsibility of the respective organisations delivering them but, together, contribute to a single award (of the degree-awarding body). Students normally have a contractual relationship with the organisation which delivers the first component and subsequently with the degree-awarding body' (QAA, p40).

3. UCEM Partnerships

3.1 Partnerships for academic delivery

UCEM currently does not engage in any partnership arrangements to deliver any elements of its taught academic awards through its model of supported online learning. All UCEM validated awards are delivered solely by the institution.

UCEM does engage in academic partnerships to support the delivery of research degrees (MPhil / PhD). In such instances UCEM will enter into a validation arrangement with another UK Higher Education Provider with Research Degree Awarding Powers whereby UCEM is the provider, and the other institution validates the provision. In these arrangements the following will apply:

a) Formal discussions about potential partnerships must not take place between members of UCEM staff and a prospective partner without written approval of the Vice Principal Education.

b) Consideration must be given to the resources required to support the partnership.

c) Due diligence is conducted using a range of methods, including desk-based research, and will consider the following areas: academic capability, financial viability, legal and cultural context, educational status and reputation, existing links and partnerships with other higher education institutions, capacity to fulfil role, powers and authorities to award degrees, legal status.

d) Risk and mitigation assessment based on due diligence is completed.

e) A formal legal agreement must be in place setting out the rights and responsibilities of each part and specifies the process and timescales for the review of the arrangement. The contract must be signed by either the Principal or Vice Principal and by the relevant senior authority within the partner institution.

f) Prime oversight of collaborative provision lies with the Academic Board as supreme academic authority. Day to day responsibility for the partnership lies with the Programme Team.

g) Completion of an annual report for on-going monitoring of the partnership arrangement.

h) Termination of a partnership arrangement will be undertaken with the best of interests of students at the forefront of any decision to ensure impact to them is minimised and that they are able to complete their studies.

i) Any new programme developed will be developed and approved in line with UCEM's Code of Practice chapter on Programme Development and Validation and will be monitored in line with Code of Practice Programme Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation.

3.2   Progression and articulation agreements

UCEM does engage in progression and articulation agreements to enable students from another institution access onto a UCEM programme with advanced standing. Any new arrangements require full curriculum mapping and the completion of a Progression Agreement Proposal Form which includes a rationale, risk and due diligence assessment and consideration of resources implications. The proposal requires consultation with the Dean of School of the Built Environment (Academic) and Recognition of Prior Learning Panel prior to scrutiny and final approval by Academic Board.

If successful it will be followed by the completion of a memorandum of understanding between the two institutions. All approved arrangements are monitored and kept under review.

3.3   Apprenticeship provision

UCEM does engage in partnership arrangements with employers and for the delivery of English and maths functional skills for its apprenticeship programmes. However, all higher education academic elements of the apprenticeship programme as detailed in section 3.1 above are delivered solely by UCEM. Further information on how these arrangements are managed and quality assured is contained in the Code of Practice chapter on Quality Assuring Apprenticeship Provision.

4.   References

QAA (2018) The revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education (opens new window).

QAA (2018) UK Quality Code, Advice and Guidance: Partnerships (opens new window)..

QAA (2011) Quality Code, chapter B10: Managing Higher Education Provision with others (opens new window).

5.   Related policies

UCEM Code of Practice chapter on Admissions and Recognition of Prior Learning (opens new window).

Code of Practice chapter on Quality Assuring Apprenticeship Provision (opens new window).