

# Procedures for validated provision

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 These procedures provide a framework for the approval and effective monitoring and management by King's of validation arrangements and draws together current individual procedures for programme and module approval, monitoring and review and collaborative provision. They align with the principles and practices set out in the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*<sup>1</sup>, specifically the principles for operating partnerships with other organisations and associated advice and guidance.
- 1.2 The University has ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities and will only consider arrangements with a Partner where there is (a) a strong strategic reason for doing so, (b) where the Partner is also subject to the UK regulatory environment and (c) where the Partner can demonstrate it has the infrastructure in place to safeguard and maintain King's standards and the quality of awards. For this reason, the University will only consider requests for validation from UK Partners.
- 1.3 The procedures are intended to support working in partnership with another organisation in a manner that safeguards the University's reputation and the quality of learning opportunities for students. This is undertaken through a set of key policy principles set out in paragraph 4 below.
- 1.4 These procedures are intended to provide information to members of staff at King's and to our validated partners to enable us to meet our regulatory obligations, particularly to the Office for Students (OfS), whilst maintaining a continuing dialogue with the Partner In respect of academic development and quality assurance.
- 1.5 These procedures do not cover 'accreditation' of partner's provision, broadly defined as the process whereby an institution without degree awarding powers is given wide authority by the University to exercise power and responsibility for academic provision. The University remains ultimately responsible for the standards and quality of its awards but chooses to only exercise limited control over the quality assurance functions of the Partner. For this reason, the University is unlikely to consider these types of arrangement due to the high complexity and risk involved.

## **2. Definition of terms**

- 2.1 The following definitions are used in this document:

**Validation** is the process whereby the University judges that a programme of study developed and delivered by another Partner institution or organisation is of an appropriate quality and standard to lead to a King's award and is subject to the University's quality assurance procedures. The University will determine on a case-by-case basis the extent to which it exercises direct control over the quality assurance aspects of the programme's management.

**Partner** describes the institution or other organisational body with which the University enters into an agreement to collaborate. It refers to partners that have one or more of their programme offerings validated by the University.

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>

### **3. Objectives of the validation process**

3.1 The objectives of the validation process are to establish whether ostensibly a case for validation exists and to ensure that the key principles underpinning the arrangement can be initially met. This will be determined through an approval process, including a validation event and the subsequent recommendations made. Following approval, the validated provision will be subject to a monitoring and review process to ensure that the key principles underpinning the arrangement can continue to be met.

### **4. Key principles**

4.1 The following key principles will underpin all validation activity at the University. The arrangement must be able to:

- Complement the strategic priorities set out in King's Strategic Vision 2029 and the University Education Strategy, including whether the Partner is of good standing and fits with the University's ethos and values.
- Fit into a subject discipline that the University has expertise in enabling the arrangement to be assigned to a particular department within a Faculty who will have the necessary oversight.
- Demonstrate that the programme(s) offered will be delivered at the appropriate standard and level to meet the requirements for the relevant King's award, including compatibility with any relevant benchmarking information and PSRB requirements
- Establish an appropriate governance structure that can be supported through the University's governance arrangements to ensure the necessary oversight for maintaining the academic standards of awards.
- Ensure that the University's legal obligations can be fully met.
- Demonstrate that the partner institution has a secure medium to long term future and is financially sound.
- Demonstrate that the Partner can meet its legal obligations in respect of equality, diversity and inclusion matters.
- Demonstrate that the appropriate resources, including staffing and support services, are in place to provide a stable and suitable learning environment that allows students to succeed.
- Demonstrate that the appropriate quality assurance mechanisms/regulatory frameworks are in place to guarantee the operation of the programme(s) to the required quality and standards as determined by the University and ensuring compliance with the external regulatory environment.

### **5. Strategic considerations**

5.1 The King's Strategic Vision 2029 is to make the world a better place and to continue to expand the significant contribution that King's makes in London and within the UK, and beyond that to an international community that serves the world. The Education Strategy is built upon the first priority of Vision 2029 - 'educate to inspire and improve'. King's Strategic Vision 2029 and Education Strategy can be located at:  
<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/aboutkings/strategy/index.aspx>

### **6. Academic standards and awards**

- 6.1 King's is responsible for the academic standards of validated programmes, their oversight and maintenance and for the compatibility of such standards with any relevant benchmark information and qualifications framework recognised within the UK, including any PSRB requirements where these may be required. This responsibility rests with the Academic Board at King's and its sub-structure. It will be carried out through several quality assurance mechanisms such as the approval, monitoring and review of the Partner and the programmes, representation at assessment sub-boards and the appointment of an external examiner who is expected to submit a report to King's.
- 6.2 Awards offered by the University are set out in the Academic Regulations. Where a Partner wishes King's to validate an award not offered by the University this will be subject to approval from the University's Academic Board at the outset.

## 7. Governance

- 7.1 The governance arrangements for partnerships operate under delegated authority from Academic Board through its sub-committee structure. Academic Board will be responsible for determining if there is a prime facia case for considering the proposal and will have final approval of the validated Partner and the provision offered, including their Academic Regulations, associated policies and procedures.
- 7.2 The College Education Committee (CEC) is a sub-committee of Academic Board and will provide strategic leadership of education for the University's, ensuring that the University's academic taught provision, including that offered by validated partners, aligns with national expectations for quality and academic standards and enhances students' learning experience. CEC will endorse the recommendation made by its sub-committees and by the relevant Faculty committee to formally request final approval of the validated Partner and provision offered from Academic Board.
- 7.3 The Programme Development and Approval Sub-Committee (PDASC) provides a strategic overview of the development of new taught programmes and has oversight of Faculty approvals at module level and reports into the College Education Committee. PDASC has responsibility for considering and approving all new validated provision, including oversight of the validation review panel outcomes and recommendations as part of the approval stage. PDASC will also consider and approve any modifications to the validated partner's provision. PDASC has oversight of the Periodic Programme Review, including those programmes offered by a validated partner. Once a Validated Agreement (also referred to as the Memorandum of Agreement/MoA) has been set up, any renewal or midterm amendment of the agreement will be considered by PDASC as part of the periodic programme review process (undertaken every five years) or subsequent changes to the suite of programmes offered by the Partner that King's agrees to validate.
- 7.4 The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Sub-Committee (QAESC) is responsible for the University's overarching quality assurance framework. QAESC has oversight of all aspects relating to validated partners. This includes the consideration of any new validated partner, reviewing the terms of reference and operational arrangements agreed with the Partner and set out in the validation agreement, reviewing the recommendations made in validation reports and providing expert advice to CEC. QAESC will also receive the minutes from the annual monitoring meetings with validated partners reporting on any outcomes to the College Education Committee.

- 7.5 The Assessment and Regulatory Oversight Sub-Committee (AROSC) has responsibility for the strategic development of assessment policy and regulation and oversight of assessment matters reporting into the CEC. Following approval of the validated Partner's Academic Regulations by Academic Board as part of the validation approval process, AROSC will have responsibility for continuing to monitor the validated Partner's Academic Regulations and recommending their approval to Academic Board via CEC on an annual basis.
- 7.6 The Faculty is responsible for maintaining the oversight of the validated Partner and the programmes offered and will be responsible for assuring Academic Board that the objectives and policy principles of the validation processes can be met. This reflects the subsequent operation of a validated programme whereby it becomes the responsibility of a Faculty (Institute/School) to approve, monitor and manage the arrangement via the usual routes of the Faculty Education Committee (or equivalent) with the Faculty Assessment Board Chair attending the validated Partner's Assessment Board to ensure the necessary oversight of the student results leading to a King's award. Therefore, proposals for validating a Partner and the programme(s) they wish to offer will normally initially be considered by the Faculty through their committee governance structure prior to submitting the proposal to Academic Board.
- 7.7 Initial validation will normally be for a period of up to five years and will be subject to annual monitoring in the second academic year following either the enrolment of the first cohort of students on a minimum two-year degree programme or the graduation of the first cohort of students on a maximum one-year degree programme. A review of the partnership and programmes will be scheduled at the start of the penultimate academic year prior to the expiry of the agreement by the relevant Faculty Education Committee (or equivalent) reporting into PDASC for formal approval.
- 7.8 Responsibility for managing the partnership arrangement rests with the relevant Executive Dean of Faculty reporting to the Vice President (Education and Student Success). The Faculty is expected to nominate an academic and professional services lead whose roles will be any day to day operations of the validated programme and to liaise with the Head of Collaborative Provision and support the Partner. The role of the Vice-Dean Education for the Faculty is to chair the annual monitoring meetings and the periodic programme review process. The role of the relevant Assessment Board Chair is to represent the College at the assessment board where any decisions on progression or award are made and support the Partner in ensuring the continued assurance of our academic awards and sharing knowledge and expertise on assessment matters. The Academic Regulations, Quality and Standards (ARQS) team role is to provide support to the relevant Faculty team to maintain oversight of the operational arrangements for the validation of a Partner's programme(s). They will also act as the first point of contact for the Partner in respect of the arrangements covered by the validation agreement. A list of responsibilities for managing the partnership arrangement is set out in paragraph 16 below.

## **8. Legal considerations**

- 8.1 Legal considerations around contract agreements may be very complex. For this reason, the University undertakes due diligence enquiries through the approval processes to satisfy itself that the proposed Partner has the legal status to enter into an agreement with King's to protect the University's interests and to safeguard against any potential conflicts of interest or competing priorities.
- 8.2 Advice should be sought from the University's Legal Services Department at the outset to

review the first draft agreement to provide the necessary assurance that the terms of the contract are consistent with all applicable laws and protect the rights and interests of King's. The Partner should be advised to seek similar advice in their own right.

- 8.3 Following a successful validation event, a Validation Agreement (MoA) will be put in place setting out the respective roles, responsibilities and obligations of King's and the Partner, including the operational arrangements for delivering the programme activity and providing students with a high-quality experience and positive outcome. The specific details of the MoA will vary according to the nature of the partnership but an indication of the likely areas that will be covered are given at *Appendix 1* below.
- 8.4 The agreement is intended to be legally-binding and will be drafted by the University and sent to the Partner for comment and review. The terms of reference and the operational arrangements must be fully agreed where possible between all the relevant Parties, with any issues resolved, before the programme activity can commence.
- 8.5 The University's policy and procedures for negotiating, approving and signing contracts and agreements on behalf of King's will apply and can be located on the [policy hub](#).

## 9. Financial considerations

- 9.1 The arrangements for establishing and maintaining a validation arrangement should be fully costed at the outset and discussed with the Partner.
- 9.2 The financial considerations for maintaining a validation agreement should consider the costs associated with the quality assurance of the programme (e.g. design; approval; modification and monitoring through King's Committee structures and the programme review process), the drafting of the agreement, and those associated with supporting the student through their academic studies (e.g. student records; academic regulations and associated student policies; assessment matters; issuing of certificates and graduation ceremony). Typical operational aspects of a validation arrangement are provided at Appendix 2.
- 9.3 The Partner shall pay fees to the University on an annual basis. These should be agreed between the parties at the outset, accounting for any potential annual increase to the initial fees, as a rule of thumb the expectation is that there would be a 5% annual increase to the initial agreed fee. Information on the agreed fees and uplift to the fees should be included in the agreement. The information provided should state who at the Partner and within the Faculty have responsibility for ensuring invoicing and receipt of payments on an annual basis, including how any annual adjustments will be applied throughout the duration of the agreement.
- 9.4 Fees will be renegotiated prior to the expiry of the agreement at the same time as the programme and partner review and before a new agreement is put in place. These costs should take account of any additional fees payable to cover the costs associated with re-validating the programmes through the programme and partner review, including the costs associated with drafting and finalising a new agreement.
- 9.5 The costings for validating a Partner's provision should be undertaken by the relevant Senior Finance Business Partner and Assistant Director of Finance for the relevant Faculty (Management Accounts).

## **10. Equality, diversity, and inclusion**

- 10.1 It is expected that validated partners have in place a strategy for equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) that includes policies demonstrating their commitment to embedding EDI throughout their organisation that is compatible with that of the University's commitment to EDI and a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination on the grounds of any protected characteristic. King's commitment is to promote equality of opportunity and create an inclusive environment where all members of its community are valued and able to succeed.
- 10.2 The equality of access and opportunity should be fully considered in the design of the programme and module components. When designing the programme consideration should also be given to how students will be supported to ensure they have an equitable quality experience, including an Access and Participation Plan that meets both the expectations of the UK Quality Code and the Office for Students.
- 10.3 The validation event and subsequent annual monitoring and review processes will assess the measures that have been put in place by the validated partner to ensure that their commitment on EDI principles will be met.

## **11. Resources**

- 11.1 Students of validated partners will not have access to the teaching and learning resources e.g. library offered by King's College London. The partner is therefore expected to ensure that the necessary teaching and learning resources, including the teaching premises, staffing arrangements and student services, will be available and accessible to students to support the delivery of the programme and the student learning experience. Thus, ensuring that successful outcomes can be delivered for all students.
- 11.2 The partner must ensure that as part of its contingency planning it will have in place sufficient numbers of appropriately qualified staff to support the expected number of students recruited to the programme and staff training and development packages.
- 11.3 The Partner should have plans in place for teaching and learning resources, including any specialist resources and/or licences needed, that will meet the needs of the expected numbers of students recruited to the programme.

## **12. Quality assurance mechanisms**

- 12.1 The University has ultimate responsibility for the academic standards and quality of learning opportunities delivered in its name and cannot delegate that responsibility. The academic standards of a King's award are aligned with the various components of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, published by the Quality assurance Agency (QAA), and are comparable with others in the sector. They describe the level of achievement that a student has to reach to gain a King's award. The University's quality assurance mechanisms and reference points, including national qualifications frameworks, subject benchmark statements and characteristics statements help the University to secure the academic standards of our awards. These are maintained and enhanced through our quality assurance mechanisms and regulated through our academic regulations and associated policies.
- 12.2 The University is also subject to the ongoing conditions for registration with the Office for Students (OfS) including any expectations relating to how it ensures the quality and standards of its awards offered by a validated Partner, equality of opportunity for students,

financial sustainability and good governance. Information relating to the validated partner will be included in an annual report to King's Council and validated partners are expected to provide information to King's on request. The Partner itself is expected to register with the OfS and demonstrate how they will be able to meet the initial and continuing conditions of registration and protect the University's interests. This includes demonstrating how they will meet or exceed any minimum outcome thresholds set for student continuation, completion, progression and student experience.

- 12.3 The University's quality assurance mechanisms ensure that where a programme is delivered by a validated Partner, it can meet any expectations for ensuring that the standards of King's awards remain credible and secure, and the student experience is of a high quality. This is undertaken through the University's processes for programme approval, monitoring, and review, set out in paragraphs 13 to 14 below and aligns to the University's internal processes to provide consistency of practice and quality across all programmes offered or awarded by King's. The Partner will be expected to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the OfS Ongoing Conditions of Registration and UK Quality Code and support King's in meeting its obligations by ensuring that the quality assurance mechanisms in place remain effective for delivering the programmes validated by King's.
- 12.4 The validation process provides assurance that both the University and the Partner have a shared understanding of their role, responsibilities, and obligations in developing and delivering the activity through its quality assurance mechanisms and can discharge their duties effectively in this respect. The respective responsibilities of both the University and the Partner in the validation process are set out in section 16 below.

### **13. Process for approval by the University**

- 13.1 King's will receive requests from Partners to validate one or more academic programmes of study offered by their institution, where they do not have the capacity to award the degree under their own degree awarding powers. The request will be sent to the Faculty who is best placed to act as the home for the Partner because they have the necessary disciplinary knowledge to support the Partner.
- 13.2 Prior to the Partner being invited to submit a formal request for validation that is considered under the three stages of the approval process, the Faculty will conduct an initial scoping exercise to determine if the request is worth pursuing from both viewpoints and to ensure that both the Partner and the Faculty have a shared understanding of expectations and the responsibilities. In this respect, the Faculty will appoint academic and professional service leads to liaise with the Partner and the University throughout the approval process and any subsequent monitoring and management processes. The Faculty leads will be expected to cost out the proposal with the relevant Senior Finance Business Partner and Assistant Director of Finance for the Faculty. Thereafter, the leads are expected to meet with the Partner to discuss the proposal and costings, including the Partner's short- and long-term goals, and the level of commitment required from both parties to successfully deliver on these objectives.
- 13.3 Following discussions with the Partner the Faculty should complete the University's standard partnership template forms to assess the risks and the Executive Dean of Faculty should then consult with the Senior Vice-President (Academic) and Vice-President (Education & Student Success) to discuss the proposal, focusing on:
  - How the Partner and proposed programme(s) can contribute to the strategic direction and goals of the University.

- The Partner's experience of delivering programmes within that field and how this can be supported by the Faculty.
- The Partner's readiness to accept proposed costings for validation.
- An indication of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats relating to the proposal.
- How the risk attached to the proposal aligns with the University's own risk appetite statement.

- 13.4 Where discussions are favourable, the Partner should be invited to make an application to the University for the validation of their programme(s) that will involve a three-stage approval process. This approval process is designed to establish whether the Partner can meet the key principles set out in paragraph 4 above and offer a programme that is designed and delivered to a high-quality providing a coherent learning experience and leading to credible and recognisable positive outcomes for students. This will be determined through a risk-based assessment of the Partner and a due diligence process that comprehensively examines the academic integrity of the programme(s) proposed and consists of three stages as follows:
- Stage One (Approval in principle of the Partner Institution)
  - Stage Two: (Detailed scrutiny of the academic provision)
  - Stage Three: (Final approval)
- 13.5 The authority to approve the request for validation rests with the University's Academic Board through its governance structure, outlined in section 7 above.

## **14. Approval processes**

### ***Stage One (Approval in principle of the Partner Institution)***

- 14.1 Stage One consists of a preliminary assessment of the Partner Institution to establish whether a *prima facie* case for validation exists.
- 14.2 The Partner will be expected to submit a self-evaluation document together with a business case setting out the rationale for validation that demonstrates:
- Evidence of good standing, including history, mission, legal status and relationships with other Partners and position within the national and local context.
  - Information on the Partner's educational partnership arrangements that may impact on King's as the validating body, including where validation may or has been sought from another Partner.
  - Information on assets, including estates, facilities, funding and any third-party rights in this respect that may impact on King's as the validating body.
  - Mutually beneficial strategic fit, including where the Partner understands where they will fit with the relevant Faculty's own strategic direction and expertise in the subject discipline.
  - Financial sustainability, including a minimum of three years of annual accounts where available or financial forecasts.
  - Full marketing report, this should include details of market research, evidence of initial and future demand for the programme and likely competitors.
  - Knowledge and experience of the education sector in the UK, including details of current and future academic plans, how your regulatory framework and associated policies will be developed to support the delivery of the programme and assessment of students. Where already offering educational activity information should be provided on recent student

performance data e.g., enrolment, retention, progression and completion and mechanisms for managing quality and standards.

- Statement of intent setting out a commitment to the continuity of teaching, learning and assessment of the programme being validated to ensure that a high-quality student experience can be met and maintained.
- Diagram showing the current or proposed structure and reporting lines of your organisation's main governance and organisational structures.
- Description of your HR policies relating to the recruitment and development of teaching, professional services and other support staff.
- Description of your equality, diversity and inclusion strategy and how you intend to embed this within your organisation and the programmes being offered to students.
- Outcomes from any internal or external audits or reviews relating to the organisation and academic provision.
- Risk appetite statement for your organisation.
- Information on the programme proposed through the completion of the University's standard Programme Proposal Form (PPF) for validated partners.

- 14.3 Documents should be submitted to the relevant Faculty for consideration and review through their relevant governance committee structure.
- 14.4 The Faculty will report their findings to the University's Academic Board who will determine whether the Partner is (a) of good standing and a fit with the University's ethos and values; (b) confirm that the Partner has a secure medium to long term future and is financially sound; and (c) that the design and delivery of the programme(s) will meet the expectations of students to the quality and standards required and make a judgement on whether a prime facia case has been made to explore the proposal further and move to stage two (validation event) in the process.
- 14.5 Following the decision from Academic Board, the Faculty leads should inform the Head of Collaborative Provision of Academic Board's decision and provide the documentation submitted by the Partner as outlined in paragraphs 14.2 and 14.3 above. The Head of Collaborative Provision will liaise with the Faculty leads to advise the Partner of the outcome from Academic Board and advise on next steps.

#### **Stage Two (*Detailed scrutiny of the academic provision*)**

- 14.6 Stage two in the process consists of a detailed examination of the academic programme(s) and associated resources and support services proposed for which the validation is requested.
- 14.7 If Academic Board approves the request for validation a validation event with the potential Partner will then take place. ARQS will liaise with the Partner, the Faculty and other relevant University staff to agree a date and timescale for the event.
- 14.8 Prior to the validation event, the Faculty leads are expected to liaise with the Partner over the completion of their programme and module specifications and organise an Employability workshop to discuss potential careers pathways for students and resources that the Partner is likely to need to support students. This documentation should be submitted as part of the paperwork required for the validation event and forms part of the programme approval process. In addition, the Faculty leads should liaise with the Partner to ensure that the final report from the employability workshop is submitted back to the Careers and Employability

Office following the event.

- 14.9 The validation event offers the opportunity for staff and students from King's and our external advisors to meet with the Partner's programme team and senior management, and where possible student reps, to discuss the proposal. The aim is to test the academic rigour of the proposal, including the process of programme design, governance and management arrangements, institution and student resources and any other related academic and quality assurance requirements. This will enable King's to feel assured that the appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure that the Partner and programme can deliver and sustain successful outcomes for participating students and maintain the quality and academic standards of King's awards.
- 14.10 Approximately six weeks before the agreed date of the event the potential Partner should forward to the ARQS Office one electronic and one paper copy of the validation documentation. The exact format of the submission is a matter for the Partner who may make use of existing documentation submitted for other purposes e.g., registration with the Office for Students (OfS), PSRB accreditation.
- 14.11 The Faculty Leads are expected to support the Partner in providing information to the University for the validation event by sharing with the Partner relevant regulations, policies and procedures that are in place at the University and by commentating on any drafts ahead of the final submission of paperwork. The leads should also consult with relevant teams at the University who can offer advice and guidance to the Partner on specific areas. The information required from the Partner to be submitted should include the following:

*Background information*

- Statement about the history and mission of the Partner in delivering education, including an indication of the positioning of the programme or academic provision within the local and national context
- Strategic plan

*Equality, Diversity & Inclusion*

- Equality, diversity & inclusion policy
- example of Equality Impact Assessment
- statement on approach to student access and participation, including equal opportunities monitoring

*Admissions*

- Recruitment, selection and admissions regulations, policies and procedures, including how these will be monitored and reviewed
- entry criteria, including any subject specific requirements
- fees, other costs and financial support
- programme marketing and prospectus arrangements
- statement on recruiting and monitoring international students, including UK Visa and Immigration compliance (if applicable)
- Access and Participation plan

*Programme content and organisation*

- aims and objectives of the programme(s)
- outline curriculum structure
- syllabus for each year of the programme(s) broken down by module or unit if appropriate

- contact hours per year broken down by type e.g., lectures, seminars, practical work
- mode of delivery e.g. on-campus, online or hybrid and how this will be supported
- teaching and learning philosophy and methods
- opportunities for embedding employability within the programme
- If applicable, arrangements for placements, internships, or study abroad, to include briefing, monitoring, and de-briefing
- management arrangements for the programme(s)
- programme and module specifications and associated regulations

*Assessment*

- rationale for the assessment methodology and how it allows achievement of the programme's objectives, including opportunities for recognition of prior learning
- assessment and feedback practices, including how student's progress will be monitored and feedback provided
- details of assessment methods both formative and summative
- details of marking schemes and approach to moderation
- terms of reference, constitution and mode of operation of examination boards

*Information given to students*

- statement on how consumer law conditions will be met, including draft information sheet and offer letters to students
- examples of student handbooks
- student terms and conditions
- example transcript and achievement record
- student prizes
- draft Academic Regulations and associated student policies
- Student Protection Plan

*Student welfare*

- personal tutor system
- health and welfare facilities and advice available for students
- Co-curricular support and careers advice available for students
- procedures for student complaints, appeals and conduct
- Prevent strategy and policies for safeguarding students

*Management and governance arrangements*

- details of the Partner's committee structure together with terms of reference, constitution and mode of operation of committees concerned with the programme(s) and/or teaching in general
- statement on intended relationship with students to support them in becoming co-creators of their education and how this will be embedded into the management and governance arrangements
- use made of management information e.g., progression, withdrawal and success rates
- details of first destination returns

*Staff*

- list of academic, technical and administrative staff involved with the programme(s)
- brief CVs of academic staff to include qualifications, current position and teaching responsibilities, previous teaching and other relevant experience, research, consultancy and other scholarly activity relevant to the programme(s), with dates

- policy on and details of staff development, training and welfare

*Resources*

- description of IT, library, teaching facilities and any other learning resources appropriate to the programme(s), including intentions for staff and student access to these resources
- description of how the provision of learning resources is related to the needs of the curriculum and provides a suitable learning environment for students
- business continuity plan
- risk register

*Quality Assurance*

- mapping document against the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*
- plan for ensuring that the quality and standards conditions set out by the OfS can be met
- description of the quality assurance mechanisms that will be put in place for the review and enhancement of the programmes (annually and periodically), including use of externality in the design, delivery, assessment methods and review of the programme(s) and arrangements for students to provide feedback

14.12 The format of the Validation event will be conducted by a panel who will visit the Partner and provide feedback on the feasibility of the arrangement:

Panel membership

The composition of the panel will normally be as follows:

- (i) Chair of the College Education Committee, who will chair the panel
- (ii) Executive Dean of the relevant Faculty
- (iii) The relevant Faculty Vice Dean Education or Associate Dean Academic Portfolio or Chair of Approval and Standards panel
- (iv) A representative from another Faculty, normally the Vice Dean Education or equivalent serving on the relevant Faculty education or academic committee.
- (v) Faculty Assessment Board Chair or equivalent
- (vi) Faculty academic and administrative leads
- (vii) External Peer Reviewer and where appropriate an External Peer Specialist
- (viii) Student Representative
- (ix) Executive Director, Education & Students
- (x) Associate Director Academic Regulations, Quality and Standards

Other Senior Officers of the University may be called on to serve on the panel depending on the outcome of the approval of the Partner at Stage One or profile of the Partner e.g., Senior Vice President (Academic), President & Principal

Administrative support for the event will be provided by the Academic Regulations, Quality and Standards team in liaison with the relevant Faculty Quality Assurance Manager or equivalent.

14.13 The responsibilities of the panel are to:

- Explore teaching and learning strategies relevant to the discipline and ensure that these

are appropriate for the structure and content of the programme proposed by the Partner and align to King's education strategy.

- Assess whether the proposed programme is well designed and able to provide a high-quality student experience to meet King's expectations for the quality and academic standards of awards in line with national quality assurance frameworks and sector-recognised standards.
  - Confirm that the content of the programme is appropriate to the subject and the qualification concerned, including compatibility with the relevant benchmark statements.
  - Confirm that students will be provided with the learning aims and outcomes for the programme and that these are achievable and appropriate to the type and level of award.
  - Confirm that assessment methods are appropriate to meet the objectives for the type and level of award offered.
  - Confirm that the appropriate resources are in place to deliver the programme and provide the necessary support to students, enabling them to demonstrate their achievement and success with a good graduate outcome that meets the minimum baseline requirements of the OfS.
  - Confirm that staffing arrangements are adequate to deliver the programme, including whether there is a wider infrastructure in place to support staff training and development.
  - Confirm that appropriate mechanisms are in place to allow students to engage fully in the quality of their student experience.
  - Confirm that regulations, policies and procedures comparable to those operated by King's are in place to deliver the programme and ensure fair access, equality of learning and the protection of students.
  - Confirm that the information provided to students and the public about the programme is accurate and transparent.
- 14.14 The panel will have received the validation documentation six weeks in advance of the event but may request additional information or clarification of issues from the potential Partner in advance of the event.
- 14.15 The event will be conducted at the Partner seeking validation. Discussions are expected to be conducted in the spirit of a critical friend with an emphasis on how the Partner will meet the academic standards and quality of a King's award and deliver positive outcomes for students. The discussions with the Partner also offer the opportunity to share best practice and support the development of the partnership.
- 14.16 The timetable will be agreed in advance between the University and the potential Partner and is likely to follow the model described below, although the length of sessions will vary depending on the number of programmes to be considered, the experience of the Partner and any areas for further investigation arising from stages one and two of the process:

30 minutes	preliminary meeting of panel
2 hours	meeting with programme team(s), including introduction from the Partner
1 hour	lunchtime meeting with students (where applicable)
1 hour	tour of facilities

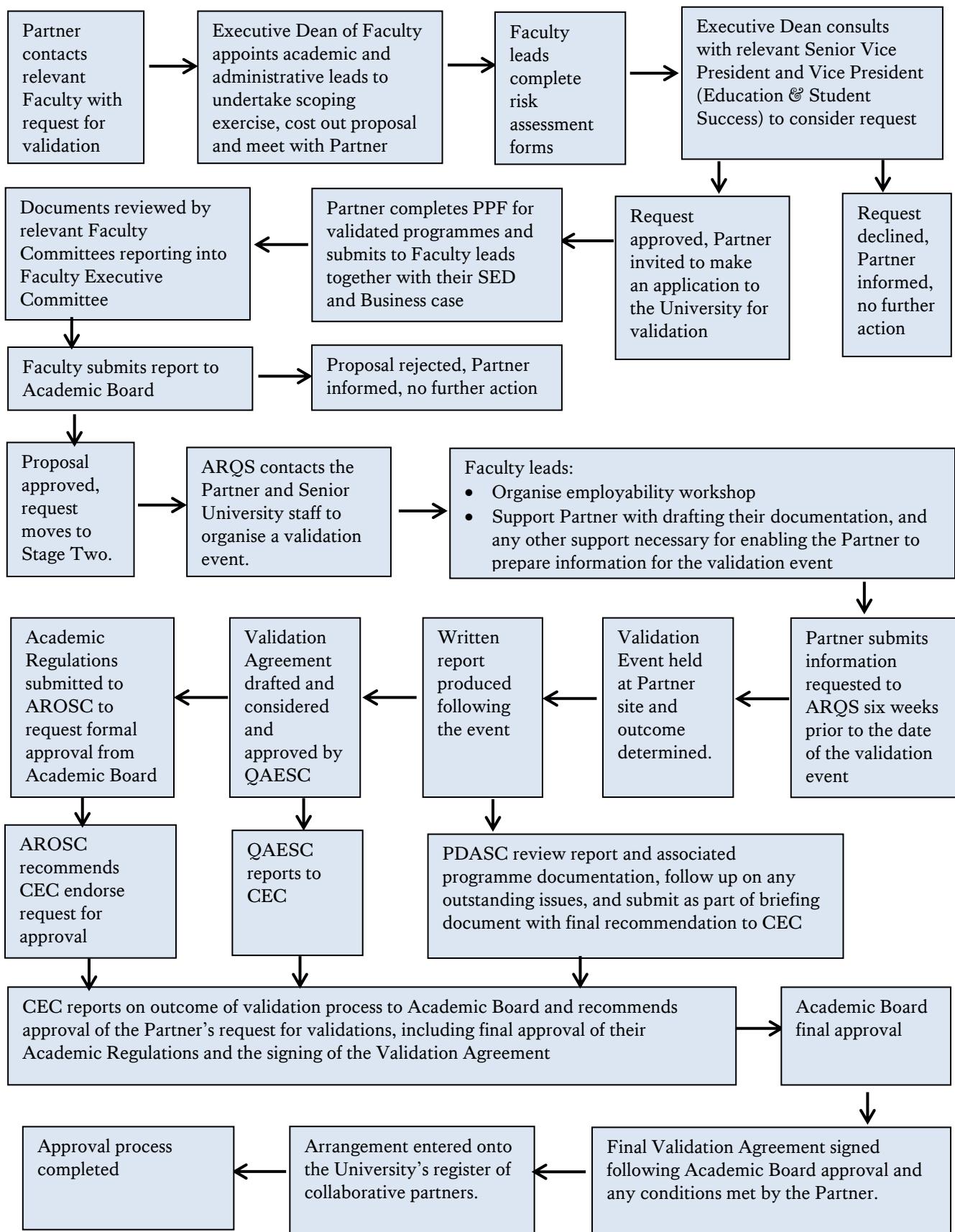
1 hour	meeting with student support staff e.g., IT, library, advice, admissions and registry services, personal tutors
30 minutes	meeting with senior managers of the Partner
30 minutes	private meeting of panel
30 minutes	feedback to Partner on outcome

- 14.17 Following discussions, the Chair of the panel will report the outcome and any recommendations and/or commendations to the partner institution. The panel will recommend one of the following outcomes:
- Approval with no conditions attached for an initial period of five years. Proposal directly proceeds to Stage Three.
  - Approval subject to confirmation that any conditions or requirements have been met by the Partner within agreed timescales. The Partner will be required to meet any conditions prior to the proposal proceeding to Stage Three.
  - Non approval. The proposal will not proceed any further at this stage and the College will provide the Partner with the reasons for its decision and suggestions for a way forward. This does not imply that a re-submission of the proposal would necessarily lead to validation.
- 14.18 A written report of the proceedings will be produced, normally within three weeks of the event. A copy of the draft report will be forwarded to the potential Partner for comments on issues of factual accuracy.
- 14.19 The drafting of the validation agreement, also referred to as the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA), setting out the terms of reference, roles, responsibilities and obligations of the Partner and King's should be commenced alongside the panel event and will be subject to approval from the University's Quality Assurance and Enhancement Sub-Committee (QAESC). If there are disagreements between the University and the Partner institution over any aspects of the Validation agreement it may be necessary to convene a further meeting between the Partner and the Faculty to resolve such issues prior to final approval being given by Academic Board. See Appendix 1 for information contained in the validation agreement.
- Stage Three (*Final approval*)**
- 14.20 The Programme Development and Approval Sub-Committee will consider the final report and outcome from the validation event together with the final drafts of the programme and module specifications and follow up with the Partner on any outstanding issues reporting on final outcomes to CEC. The Chair of CEC will be responsible for submitting the final report to Academic Board requesting final consideration and approval.
- 14.21 The Assessment and Regulatory Oversight Committee will have responsibility for reviewing the Academic Regulations and following up on any issues submitting the final version to Academic Board for approval via CEC.
- 14.22 Following final approval by Academic Board, University officers will liaise with the Partner to sign the validation agreement.
- 14.23 The Partner will not be permitted to advertise a programme to students as being validated by the University until Academic Board has given final approval and has received confirmation that the Partner has successfully registered, or that registration is conditional

with agreement, with the Office for Students (OfS).

- 14.24 The approval process is completed once the final Validation Agreement is in place having been signed by all relevant Parties and the University's register of collaborative partners has been updated to reflect the partnership activity. For King's the authorised signatory for the Validation Agreement will be the Vice President (Education & Student Success) or their nominee.
- 14.25 A flow diagram of the approval process is set out in section 14.26 below.

14.26 Flow diagram of the approval process



## **15. Monitoring and review processes**

- 15.1 All validated provision approved by King's is subject to the University's monitoring and review processes. These align to the principles and key practices set out in the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, in particular those relating to monitoring, evaluating and enhancing provision. The purpose is to provide a regular health check that is both helpful and realistic focusing on key quality and standards issues and enhancement through annual monitoring and periodic review processes. Undertaking these processes enables us to assess the quality and standards of the provision offered and consider how the teaching and learning opportunities for students may be continuously improved.

### **Annual monitoring**

- 15.2 The Partner is responsible for submitting an annual report to the University by the 31<sup>st</sup> of January each academic year with the expectation that the annual monitoring meeting will take place by the end of the Spring Term unless agreed otherwise between the Partner and the Vice Dean Education. The submission of the annual monitoring report following the approval to validate will take place in the academic year following the first cohort of students commencing on the validated programme and will continue annually thereafter until the final year of the validation agreement where a periodic programme review will take place instead.
- 15.3 The Partner is free to design their annual report on the operation of the programme(s) for submission to King's for the annual monitoring meeting. However, the design should be approved by the relevant Vice Dean Education to ensure that King's responsibilities can be met. The annual report should include, where available, the following information:
- Curriculum enhancement and assessment practice with action plans.
  - Student experience with action plans
  - Student outcomes with action plans
  - Statistical data relating to:
    - Admissions and widening participation
    - Student numbers i.e., continuations, withdrawals and interruptions
    - Student achievement and graduate outcomes
  - Details of any amendments being made to academic regulations and associated policies for use in the following academic year
  - External Examiner reports including summary of their consideration and action taken or proposed
  - Details of support and guidance provided to students including the use made of student feedback with institutional and programme policies, procedures, and regulations
  - Summary of available and proposed resources, including physical environment and student services to support students achieve success outcomes and support staff development
  - Areas of good practice to highlight and plans for continuous improvement
  - List of any student complaints or appeals received and their outcome
  - Summary of equality, diversity and inclusion considerations, including action plans
  - Interactions with the external regulatory environment, including how conditions of registration with the OfS are being met
  - Evaluation of the Partnership and future plans

- Any other quality assurance matters relating to the delivery of the programme
- 15.4 To evaluate teaching and learning and impact, commentary should focus on what you did, how you did it and why, whether what you did made any difference and how do you know, with action plans at both institutional and programme level. From the second occasion of the annual monitoring process, action plans should include updates on implementations from the previous academic year.
- 15.5 Notes should be provided on the statistical data requested e.g. admissions and widening participation, student progression, achievement and graduate outcome survey results (including where possible data on graduate salaries), identifying any trends emerging from the data, particularly around protected characteristics, attainment gaps.
- 15.6 Commentary should be provided on the following areas:
- How students are actively engaged in their studies and how their comments feed into and are acted upon within the relevant governance structure of the validated partner;
  - What current resources are available to support students on the programme and how these are reviewed to ensure they are sufficient to meet the needs of the students;
  - How staff are supported and enabled to personally develop their skills and knowledge to deliver a high quality academic experience;
  - How the programme and support for students has been continuously enhanced, including highlighting any areas of good practice that can be shared with King's;
  - What complaints and appeals have been received throughout the year and how these have been resolved, including any trends from previous years;
  - What actions are being taken to embed equality, diversity and inclusion within the curriculum and promote equality of opportunity;
  - Any other areas that any impact on the quality and standards of the programme and support for students, for example where the programme includes accreditation from a PSRB who may have commented on quality and standards issues, meeting ongoing conditions of registration with the OfS including reportable events.
- 15.7 In addition to the annual report form, the external examiner reports should be included as an appendix and any issues arising highlighted with resulting action plans (if appropriate) as well as areas of good practice identified.
- 15.8 Where there have been any changes to policies, procedures or academic regulations or suspension of regulations this should be included as a separate report. Academic Regulations will require approval from the University's Academic Board on an annual basis.
- 15.9 The minutes of the annual monitoring meeting will be agreed with the Partner and reported into the University's Quality Assurance and Enhancement Sub-Committee for consideration.

#### **Periodic review**

- 15.10 The validation of the Partner and validated provision is for a specific period. In the first instance the validation period will be between three and five years depending on the outcome of the validation event. Thereafter, the validated provision will be subject to renewal for a five-year agreement period in line with the University's periodic review process. The validation period is set out in the validation agreement (MoA) and includes the expiry date of the validation agreement that considers the timeline for the periodic review

process, negotiation of the new agreement and CMA compliance.

- 15.11 Prior to the expiry of the validation agreement, the Partner and programmes offered are subject to periodic review. Ideally, this is conducted around the 4th anniversary of the validation date, in the first instance, and a minimum of one year prior to the expiry of the initial and any subsequent validation agreement to allow plenty of time for the revalidation of the Partner's programme(s) ahead of the final cohort of students registering for the programme and any marketing considerations for future cohorts of students.
- 15.12 The process is undertaken by the relevant Faculty team following the University's standard procedures for review of programmes that is in place at the appropriate time. Where the Programme is also accredited by a professional body, the review may be undertaken jointly.
- 15.13 The review process should also focus on the continuing relationship with the Partner and plans for sustaining the relationship further. This will be done via the completion of a Review of Activity form and a review of the validation agreement alongside the periodic programme review.
- 15.14 The outcomes from the periodic review process will be submitted to PDASC for consideration and approval to revalidate the partner programmes for a five year period.

## **16. Responsibilities of the University and Partner**

- 16.1 In addition to the monitoring and review processes set out in section 15 above for managing the arrangements with the Partner for the validated provision, the day-to-day management of the arrangement around the student lifecycle will operate in a similar way to King's internal provision with named contacts and their roles, responsibilities and obligations detailed in the validation agreement and a typical timeline for the operational arrangements in monitoring and managing the activity between the Partner and the University is set out in Appendix 2.
- 16.2 The Faculty is responsible for the oversight of the Partner's validated provision with the Partner being responsible for the day-to-day operations of the validated programme and the student contract. Students will not have a direct contract with the University and will not be able to use the University's student resources and facilities.
- 16.3 The main responsibilities of the Faculty in ensuring that the validated programme(s) offered by their Partner are appropriate for an award made by the University are as follows:
  - To appoint academic and administrative leads to act as key contacts for the Partner and liaise with the Head of Collaborative Provision and other relevant central departments at the University.
  - To liaise with the Head of Collaborative Provision and the Partner in issuing the formal validation agreement setting out in detail the roles, responsibilities and obligations of the University and Partner, including financial and marketing arrangements.
  - To liaise with the Partner and the University's communications team to announce and publicise the partnership.
  - To provide introductions to the Partner for the Registry Services team to facilitate uploading data onto the University's SITS system for the purposes of invoicing and providing assessment results leading to final award.
  - To issue an invoice to the Partner for the validated programme(s).
  - To appoint an external examiner(s) for the validated programme(s) reporting into the relevant

Faculty Assessment Board. The arrangements for this should be agreed with the Partner and put in place at the outset before the programme is delivered by the Partner.

- To attend the Partner's assessment board meetings and scrutinise external examiner reports. The external examiner(s) will be paid by the University following the submission of their report.
- To liaise with the Boards and Awards team to ensure that students of the validated Partner are issued with formal certification of their award, including relevant date of award.
- To liaise with the Partner and the Boards and Awards team to approve the wording of the student transcript issued to students where this relates to the final award made by King's and on the design of the final degree certificate that will be issued to students. The University will send the degree certificates to the Partner for distribution to their students alongside the approved transcript.
- To inform the Partner of any relevant University regulations, policies or procedures that may impact on them and to provide support, including where appropriate introductions to University staff, to support the Partner in developing their own regulations, policies and procedures.
- To consider the Partners Academic Regulations and submit this to Academic Board for approval via the University's usual committee governance structure.
- To provide guidance to the Partner on any matters pertaining to student complaints where the student has a final right of appeal to the University through stage three of our complaints procedure.
- To liaise with the Head of Collaborative Provision in facilitating the annual monitoring meeting. The annual monitoring meeting will be serviced by ARQS office.
- To formally review the Partner's validated programmes through the University's annual monitoring and periodic review processes.

16.4 The main responsibilities of the Partner for ensuring that the validated programmes are delivered at an appropriate level to satisfy the academic standards and quality of a King's award are as follows:

- To provide the Head of Collaborative Provision via the relevant Faculty leads with publicity and promotional material relating to the programme and information to students, including programme handbooks.
- To agree with the Faculty leads the publicity and promotion of the programme, including holding discussions on the use of the King's brand and marketing material, on an annual basis. Discussions should also focus on terms and conditions issued to students ahead of each annual student recruitment cycle.
- To establish a framework for managing records relating to the validation to meet any legal or regulatory requirements and for audit purposes.
- To provide the University's Student Lifecycle Systems team via the relevant Faculty leads with details of their students, their status and if applicable, module registrations within the relevant timeframe i.e. six weeks after each process takes place. This is to ensure that records can be created for the purposes of invoicing the Partner for the number of students participating in the validated programme, and that assessment boards can be set up correctly to receive paperwork in a timely manner to enable the University to award the final degree to the Partner's students within the agreed timeframe set out in the validation agreement. The Partner is also responsible for ensuring that the University is made aware of any changes to a student's initial registration status to ensure that the accuracy of records can be maintained.
- To liaise with the Faculty leads on the design of the student transcript. The design of the transcript will need to be approved by the University's Boards and Awards and Brand and Marketing teams ahead of the first cohort of students completing the programme.

- To issue co-branded transcripts to students following their successful completion of the programme. Students who have successfully completed the validated programme and been formally awarded by King's will be invited to the University's Graduation Ceremony.
- To establish a formal mechanism for dealing with student appeals and complaints and route through to the University's complaints procedures ahead of final completion of procedures and referral to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) and to maintain records of any students appeals and complaints received.
- To nominate an external examiner(s) for the programme(s) who will be appointed in accordance with the University procedures taking into consideration the advice of the Partner and the endorsement of the relevant Faculty Assessment Board.
- To provide induction and support to the external examiner(s) to help them in performing their duties.
- To establish an Assessment Board with relevant terms of reference and membership in liaison with the relevant Faculty Assessment Board Chair. The membership must include the University's appointed external examiner and Faculty Assessment Board Chair or nominee. Student results discussed and approved at the meeting should be noted on the University's approved template for reporting of results and submitted together with the minutes of the meeting within one week of the meeting taking place to the University's Assessment Boards and Awards team. The template form for results should be requested from the University's Student Lifecycle team at least four weeks ahead of the scheduled meeting as it will need to include the King's student ID.
- To support the external examiner in submitting their report to the University, including scrutinising the report, and responding to any requests for further information from the relevant Faculty Assessment Board Chair.
- To submit a final draft of their Academic Regulations for use in the following academic year together with an advisory note on changes relating to the current regulators to the Head of Collaborative Provision by 31<sup>st</sup> March in any given academic year. These will be considered by the relevant Chair of the Faculty Assessment Board or equivalent reporting to Academic Board for final approval via the University's Assessment and Regulatory Oversight Sub-Committee (AROSC) and College Education Committee (CEC). This is to ensure parity with King's own academic regulations and that the necessary framework is in place to ensure the quality and standards of a King's award.
- To provide an annual monitoring report to the Head of Collaborative Provision on request.
- To participate and provide necessary information to the Faculty Education Committee or equivalent as part of the periodic programme review process.

## Appendix 1

### Validation Agreement (also known as the Memorandum of Agreement)

All collaborative arrangements must be covered by a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA), signed by the relevant authorities. The purposes of the validation agreement are to:

- (i) establish legally binding terms of reference between the Parties;
- (ii) define the means by which the quality and academic standards of the programme will be maintained for the delivery of the programme and student experience;
- (iii) ensure that the nature of the collaborative arrangement is clearly set out, will operate smoothly, and that channels of authority and accountability are clearly identified.

The specific details will vary according to the nature of the collaboration, but the following gives an indication of the areas that will be covered.

1. Background to the arrangement.
2. Definitions used within the context of the agreement.
3. Description of validated provision.
4. Period of Programme validation.
5. Regulatory framework under which the validated programmes will operate.
6. Management and governance arrangements;
7. Staffing arrangements;
8. The respective roles, responsibilities and obligations of the University and the Partner in respect of the oversight and maintenance of the academic standards of awards and quality assurance for delivering the programme(s), including approval, monitoring and management mechanisms.
9. Responsibilities for the recruitment and selection of students;
10. Responsibilities for the enrolment and registration of students, maintenance of student records and provision of information and support, including reporting to external agencies.
11. Responsibilities relating to student discipline, complaints and appeals. As the University is not permitted to delegate responsibility for the academic standards of its awards, ultimate responsibility for academic appeals and complaints about academic standards will be retained by the University.
12. Assessment and examination arrangements to include the appointment and role of external examiners.
13. Responsibilities for the conferment of awards, including the issue and secure control of award certificates.
14. Responsibilities for the issue of transcripts.
15. Financial and statistical arrangements.
16. Publicity and promotional material arrangements, including use of King's branding.
17. Staff arrangements.
18. Operating arrangements, including reporting and communication requirements for the provision of regular and sufficient information to enable the University to be confident that

the responsibilities of the Partner are being met. Feedback mechanisms between the University and Partner.

19. Responsibilities for Intellectual Property Rights, Data Protection and Freedom of Information.
20. Duration and termination of the agreement, including provisions for review, and procedures for enabling either Party to withdraw from or suspend the agreement if the other Party fails to fulfil its obligations.
21. Consequences of termination of the agreement in respect of obligations to students.
22. Dispute resolution mechanism.
23. Other legal considerations, including those that pertain to the entire agreement; confidentiality; GDPR; governing law and jurisdiction; exclusion of contracts; third party rights; indemnity and insurance; assignment; Force Majeure; notices, waivers and variation to the agreement.

## Appendix 2

### Typical timeline for operational arrangements in monitoring and managing activity

Activity	Timeframe	Responsible
Changes to partnership arrangements including approval of new programmes, modifications to existing provision considered by Faculty Education Committee and where appropriate PDASC	held six times a year	Partner and Faculty
Marketing of programmes	Agreed annually prior to marketing deadlines	Partner and Faculty in liaison with Brand and Marketing
Receipt of and maintenance of student records including changes to student status	Created annually and updated as applicable. Data to be received within six weeks of cohort starting on programme	Partner and Faculty in liaison with Student Lifecycle Systems
Production of course materials and handbooks including advice from Faculty on changes at the University that may impact the Partner	Reviewed annually. To be received within six weeks of cohort starting on programme	Partner and Faculty
Assessment Boards to consider results, possible student appeals, academic regulations and external examiner reports	Held in each semester	Partner and Faculty Assessment Board Chair
Receipt of assessment and award results		Partner and Faculty in liaison with Boards and Awards
Issuing of student degree certificates	Undertaken within 4 weeks following relevant Assessment Board	Boards and Awards in liaison with Partner
Graduation Ceremonies	Held in January and July	Faculty in liaison with Partner and Student Transition and Outcomes
Review of academic regulations by the Faculty Assessment Board Chair recommending final approval to Academic Board via AROSC and CEC	Held annually. To be received by 31 <sup>st</sup> March from Partner and reviewed by Assessment Board Chair ahead of AROSC meeting in May	Partner and Faculty Board Chair
Annual Monitoring meeting	Held annually prior to end of April	Head of Collaborative Provision in liaison with Faculty Vice-Dean Education and Partner
Programme review and/or review of the partnership arrangements	Held 12 months prior to the expiry of the MoA	Faculty in liaison with Partner