

Academic Lead (Partnership): Role Description

1. Main role purpose

Every educational partnership must have a nominated Academic Lead.¹ The role-holder may be known by another title but will be the person with lead responsibility for overseeing the partnership and must therefore have sufficient capacity to undertake associated tasks. The Academic Lead may or may not also be a Programme Director² (for example, a partnership may cover more than one programme, or may relate to a joint or dual doctoral award). Where Academic Lead and Programme Director roles for a collaborative programme are held by different individuals, these role-holders will need to work closely together to discharge their responsibilities for the delivery of the programme. Where a partnership covers more than one programme, the Academic Lead has overall responsibility for liaison with the partner(s) to ensure the successful running of the collaboration with respect to all the relevant programmes.

In summary, Academic Leads are responsible for:

1. leading on the proposal for a new educational partnership;
2. liaison with equivalent role-holder(s) at the partner institution(s) to ensure the successful development and maintenance of the partnership;
3. overseeing the management and regular monitoring of the educational partnership once established;
4. contributing as required to the periodic review/renewal of the educational partnership;
5. overseeing the orderly termination of/withdrawal from the educational partnership, if applicable.

2. Appointment

Academic Leads are members of the University's academic staff:

- who hold an open contract of employment at the University of at least 0.5 FTE
- who have appropriate knowledge and skills, and sufficient time, to discharge their obligations in relation to the educational partnership. Appropriate skills include the ability to provide academic leadership with respect to the partnership; to engage effectively with colleagues both internally and at external partner institution(s) to monitor and enhance collaborative delivery and safeguard the quality of learning opportunities for students, with reference to the University's quality framework for educational partnerships; and to use initiative to identify and resolve any issues constructively, involving expertise of professional services teams where required. Members of staff must declare any perceived or actual conflict of interest in relation to the partner institution(s) before an appointment decision is made.³

¹ See the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Educational Collaborative Arrangements*, <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/edpart/>

² See Programme Director role description: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/facultyadvice/policy/>

³ For Conflict of Interest, see Annex 2 to the *Regulations and Code* (as per footnote 1).

Where the proposal to develop a new partnership originates within the Faculty, the nomination of an Academic Lead will be agreed by the Dean. Where the proposal originates from University-level strategic discussions, the nomination of an Academic Lead will be agreed by the PVC Education and Students. Approval must be given by the Dean/PVC as appropriate should the Academic Lead who led on the proposal subsequently change during the implementation of an agreed partnership.

3. Establishing the Partnership

3.1 Developing and submitting the proposal for a new partnership

The Academic Lead is responsible for the development of the initial proposal for the new educational collaborative arrangement, in order to secure strategic approval in principle for the partnership. This will involve seeking advice and support from relevant Professional Services, and particularly the Academic Quality and Partnerships Office (AQPO) in the first instance, as well as securing internal support from within the School/Faculty for the proposal as required. The Academic Lead is responsible for completion of the proposal form, articulating the rationale for the proposal and assembling the necessary background information, with support from Professional Services.

3.2 Liaison with the partner(s)

The Academic Lead is responsible for confirming that the proposal has support at the appropriate level from the partner institution(s); putting colleagues in the respective institutions in contact with each other to negotiate aspects of the proposed arrangement in a timely fashion; and making prospective collaborating organisation(s) aware that educational partnerships are subject to the University's internal quality assurance procedures and underpinned by the QAA Quality Code Chapter B10: *Managing Higher Education Provision with Others*.⁴

3.3 Approval of the collaborative programme

Where a new collaborative programme is being proposed, the programme approval process will be followed once initial strategic approval for the partnership has been secured. The Academic Lead may also be the lead on taking forward the case for the new programme, or if not, should contribute as appropriate with respect to the collaborative nature of the programme.

4. The Collaboration Agreement

Before an approved new partnership arrangement commences, the arrangement must be underpinned by a signed Collaboration Agreement. This Agreement will be developed by the Secretary's Office and the Academic Quality and Partnerships Office in consultation with other Professional Services (e.g. Finance) as required. The Academic Lead will provide input to and comment on the Agreement as appropriate and help facilitate its negotiation with the partner(s). Where the University of Bristol is not the lead partner, the Academic Lead will work with the above Professional Services teams in reviewing and negotiating on

⁴ <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-b>

the lead partner's proposed Agreement in order to ensure that its contents conform with the requirements of the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Educational Collaborative Arrangements*.

5. Oversight and Review of the Partnership

The Academic Lead is responsible for:

- i) Overseeing the implementation of the partnership arrangement in accordance with the provisions set out in the signed Collaboration Agreement.
- ii) Ensuring effective ongoing communication channels with the partner(s) for the successful delivery of the partnership arrangement.
- iii) Developing appropriate ongoing engagement with the partnership within the University.
- iv) Ensuring that detailed operational records on the partnership arrangement are held locally and are accurate, complete and readily accessible. This will include the up-to-date Annual Operating Plan, where applicable.
- v) Ensuring that accurate and timely information on the partnership arrangement is provided to AQPO, for maintenance of the relevant entry in the University's Partnerships Register.
- vi) Ensuring that the partnership arrangement is subject to the University's quality assurance procedures (e.g. Annual Programme Review), and that collaborating partners are appropriately involved in these procedures.
- vii) Ensuring that information for current and prospective students, and general publicity material, with respect to the partnership arrangement is accurate and clear, and that where such information is produced by the partner it has been reviewed/approved by the University as set out in the Collaboration Agreement.
- viii) Contributing as required to the periodic review process for the partnership arrangement. Depending on the precise nature of the review, this will involve completing the review/renewal form, providing evidence on the operation of the partnership to date, attending review meeting(s), and liaising with counterparts at the partner institution, staff and students concerning participation in review meetings and any site visit as necessary.
- ix) Depending on the outcome of periodic review, contribute as required to the renegotiation of the partnership arrangement and development of a new Collaboration Agreement, working with the relevant Professional Services.
- x) If required, and working with the relevant Professional Services, oversee the orderly termination of/withdrawal from the partnership arrangement, ensuring that the interests of students are safeguarded during this process.

Owned by: Educational Partnerships Evaluation Group. Approved by: University Academic Quality & Standards Committee [January 2016] and University Education Committee [March 2016]. Minor updates made January 2017.