

REGULATIONS AND CODE OF PRACTICE FOR EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

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Associated documents

Available at: www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/edpart/

- Policy Framework for Educational Collaborative Arrangements
- Policy on Joint and Dual Doctoral Awards
- Proposal Form – New Educational Collaborative Arrangement
- Guidance for Proposers – New Educational Partnership Approval
- Periodic Review and Reassessment Form for Educational Collaborative Arrangements
- Guidance for Proposers – Review and renewal existing Educational Partnership

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| Date updated | 6 February 2017 |
| Approval route | Educational Partnerships Evaluation Group, Education Committee, Senate |
| Date of next review | By May 2018 |
| Responsibility for review | Educational Partnerships Evaluation Group, Academic Quality and Partnerships Office |

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The University's requirements for educational collaborative arrangements are set out in these Regulations and Code of Practice ('the Code').
- 1.2 The Code provides a formal structure for the development of educational collaborative arrangements within a quality assurance framework. This structure and framework incorporates the principles from the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) *Chapter B10: Managing higher education provision with others* (<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/quality-code-B10.pdf>).
- 1.3 The parts of the Code where the text is in boxes are University Regulations. These regulations set out the core requirements that must be followed for educational collaborative arrangements.
- 1.4 There are a range of different educational collaborative arrangements supported by the University, covering a wide spectrum of activity: from student exchanges and placements in industry, to joint awards (as permitted under the University's Charter), to Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs). The **Policy Framework for Educational Collaborative Arrangements** (www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/edpart/) states the range of possible educational collaborative arrangements at the University, and the Partnerships Register lists its current arrangements.
- 1.5 The Code covers the full range of the University's educational collaborative arrangements. Proportionality forms a significant aspect of these regulations. The procedures that apply to any particular arrangement will therefore vary according to its category and the level of associated risk.

2. Definition of an educational collaborative arrangement

- 2.1 An educational collaborative arrangement is a programme of study, or a part of a programme of study, that is delivered, supported or assessed with another organisation. An arrangement will fall within the scope of this Code if the achievement of the learning outcomes for a unit or programme is dependent on the collaboration.
- 2.2 The Code applies to educational collaborative arrangements with any institution or organisation, within the UK or overseas, where the achievement of learning outcomes is dependent on the collaboration.

3. Key principles

3.1 Educational collaborative arrangements can produce effective and innovative programmes by combining expertise and resources. They must align with the University's aims in order to justify the associated risks and the resources required to deliver them successfully.

3.2 The **Policy Framework for Educational Collaborative Arrangements** sets out the University's approach to educational collaborative arrangements in the context of its *Vision and Strategy 2009-16* and Education, Research and International Strategies.

3.3 Educational collaborative arrangements must be developed in accordance with the Policy Framework for Educational Collaborative Arrangements.

3.4 When the University considers whether to work collaboratively, it needs to assess:

- the rationale for the collaboration;
- the contribution of the potential collaborating organisation(s) to the University's aims; and
- the infrastructure required for the collaboration.

3.5 Collaborating organisations should be highly-regarded organisations that share the University's educational aims and values. The quality of the learning opportunities and the learning environment are crucial concerns. As a degree-awarding body, the University has ultimate responsibility for the academic standards of its awards and the quality of the learning opportunities provided for its students.

3.6 Educational collaborative arrangements need to be carefully developed to safeguard the student learning experience.

3.7 It is vital that arrangements give due attention to issues of academic standards and quality assurance. Clear agreement must be reached on the roles and responsibilities of each collaborating organisation.

4. The governance framework

5. The Educational Partnerships Evaluation Group is responsible for the Code and for embedding policy and processes for collaborative arrangements within the University's wider educational governance. It has a central role in the safeguarding of quality and standards. It oversees the Code, the Register and the types of arrangement supported by the University, all of which are reviewed annually. It scrutinises proposals for new educational collaborative arrangements and for the renewal of existing arrangements following periodic review, to ensure that these align with the University's regulatory, policy

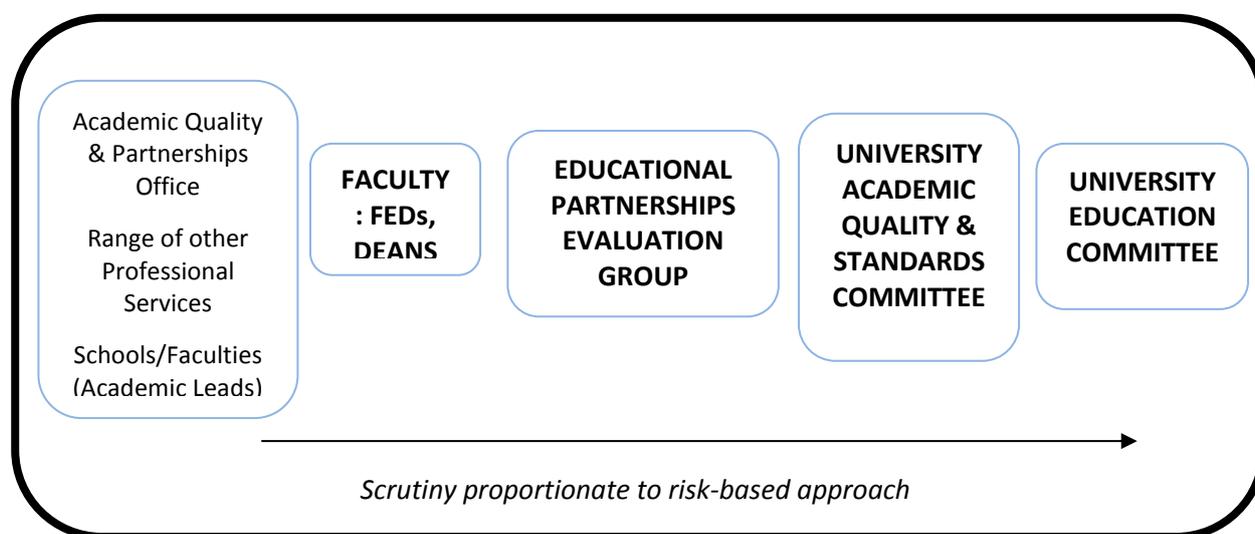
and quality assurance framework. The Group's Terms of Reference and Membership are at: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/groups/educational-partnership-evaluation-group/#d.en.223239>

4.2 The Educational Partnerships Evaluation Group reports to the University Education Committee via the University Academic Quality and Standards Committee.¹ The University Education Committee has ultimate oversight for educational collaborative arrangements.

4.3 University Education Committee is responsible for overseeing, on behalf of Senate, all educational collaborative arrangements.

4.4 The first point of contact for collaborative arrangements is the Academic Quality and Partnerships Office within Academic Registry. Other Professional Services that perform roles in the development and scrutiny of arrangements are: Faculty Education Managers, Finance Services, the Secretary's Office, Bristol Doctoral College (BDC), Research and Enterprise Development, the International Office and Student Recruitment, Access and Admissions.

Figure 1: Governance Summary for educational collaborative arrangements



5 Safeguarding quality and standards

Institutional responsibility for Quality Assurance

¹ To come into effect in 2015-16

5.1 The University has ultimate responsibility for the academic standards and quality of its units and programmes, including those that are wholly or partly conducted by collaborating organisations.

5.2 Responsibility for academic standards must be maintained in the context of educational collaborative arrangements. It must be ensured that standards reach the appropriate level in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and that the University's assessment regulations are applied, including appropriate arrangements for external examining and Examination Boards.

5.3 The University's responsibility for quality assurance and the role of its quality assurance procedures must be clear to all collaborating organisations.

5.4 It is not normally permitted for a collaborating organisation to sub-contract collaborative provision to a third party, or assign powers delegated by the University of Bristol through an arrangement of its own. Exceptionally, proposals for sub-contracted arrangements must be endorsed by the Educational Partnerships Evaluation Group in principle before proceeding.

5.5 All students who are registered for a University of Bristol award that is delivered through an educational collaborative arrangement are considered students of the University of Bristol for external and internal quality assurance purposes. Regardless of where they are situated, these students must not be disadvantaged in terms of the quality of learning opportunities.

5.6 In cases where the University is a partner in a collaborative arrangement led by another organisation, the arrangement must still be consistent with this Code, including suitable provisions for annual programme review and external examining. Any differences must be agreed as part of the approval process and explicitly stated in the written agreement.

The Academic Lead

5.7 Collaborative arrangements are owned at Faculty and School level and must be effectively managed. An Academic Lead with appropriate delegated authority to manage an educational collaborative arrangement must be appointed.

5.8 It is the responsibility of the relevant Dean or Deans to ensure that suitable Academic Leads are appointed, that they have appropriate knowledge and skills, and that they have time to carry out their obligations. Academic Leads must be a member of academic staff holding an open contract of employment at the University of at least 0.5 FTE.

5.9 The Academic Lead is responsible for making collaborating organisation(s) aware that educational collaborative arrangements are subject to the University's internal quality assurance procedures and underpinned by the QAA Chapter B10: *Managing Higher Education Provision with Others*.

5.10 The University must be able to satisfy itself that the terms and conditions that were originally approved continue to be met, and that educational collaborative arrangements maintain adequate leadership.

The central Register

5.11 The University maintains a central Register of its educational collaborative arrangements. The Register provides an accurate and up-to-date record of educational collaborative arrangements, and forms part of the oversight of these activities.

5.12 Academic Leads are responsible for ensuring that accurate and timely information on approved arrangements is provided to the Academic Quality and Partnerships Office, which is responsible for maintaining the Register.

5.13 The Register is reviewed annually and the Educational Partnerships Evaluation Group recommends the updated Register to the University Education Committee.

Documentation and the central repository

5.14 The University expects that the documentation related to educational collaborative arrangements is accurate, complete and readily accessible. Formal documents establishing or renewing arrangements are held by the Academic Quality and Partnerships Office. Detailed records on the operation of an agreement are held locally and are the responsibility of the Academic Lead.

5.15 The central repository for Collaboration Agreements establishing or renewing educational collaborative arrangements is held by the Academic Quality and Partnerships Office.

5.16 The Academic Lead is responsible for ensuring that all other records which are stored locally (e.g. operational documents) are accurate, complete and readily accessible.

6 A risk-based approach

6.1 The University takes a risk-based approach in developing, approving and managing educational collaborative arrangements. This assists in mitigating the inherent risks of

working with other organisations. Procedures for the approval and review of arrangements are tailored and proportionate to the risks of the collaboration.

- 6.2 An assessment of the risks of a potential collaboration is undertaken by the University prior to the approval process. Assessment is based on a grading system that takes account of the complexity of the collaborative arrangement, the resources available for the collaboration, and the status of the collaborating organisation(s), amongst other factors. The full risk assessment framework is available from the Academic Quality and Partnerships Office.

6.3 The University uses a risk-based approach to approve, manage and review educational collaborative arrangements. All potential arrangements are subject to the risk assessment framework.

7 Developing new educational collaborative arrangements

- 7.1 New educational collaborative arrangements will originate from either University strategic initiatives or from within Faculties and Schools.

7.2 In all cases, the key principles outlined in Section 3 – including strategic fit, the compatibility of potential collaborating organisations and the quality of learning opportunities – must be considered when developing new educational collaborative arrangements.

- 7.3 The **Policy Framework for Educational Collaborative Arrangements** is of particular relevance when developing a new arrangement. All proposals will be scrutinised in the context of these key principles in combination with the risk-based approach set out in Section 6. It is therefore essential that these factors are considered when developing educational collaborations.

7.4 If an arrangement is being developed that does not fall into one of the permitted categories set out in the Policy Framework for Educational Collaborative Arrangements, advice must be sought from the Academic Quality and Partnerships Office before submission to the initial assessment stage (see Section 8.3).

- 7.5 An Academic Lead must be in place to take a proposal forward (see Section 5.7). The focal point in supporting the development and negotiation of proposed new collaborative arrangements is provided by the Academic Quality and Partnerships Office. Support will also be provided by the relevant Faculty Education Manager and other central Professional Services as required (see Section 4.4).

7.6 The Academic Lead is responsible for the development of new proposed educational collaborative arrangements, which includes seeking advice and support from relevant Professional Services.

7.7 During the development stage, timely consideration should be given to how the requirements of any Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) will be met to secure accreditation of programme(s) that are to be delivered through the proposed collaborative arrangement.

7.8 Where PSRB accreditation is sought, proposals for new collaborative programmes must include a timetable, and the roles and responsibilities with regards to securing professional recognition at the appropriate stage.

8 The approval process

8.1 Scrutiny of proposals for new collaborative arrangements includes those where the University is a partner in a collaborative arrangement led by another organisation. It is proportionate to the nature and complexity of the arrangement and the level of risk involved. University-level scrutiny is carried out by the Educational Partnerships Evaluation Group with oversight by the University Academic Quality and Standards Committee and University Education Committee.

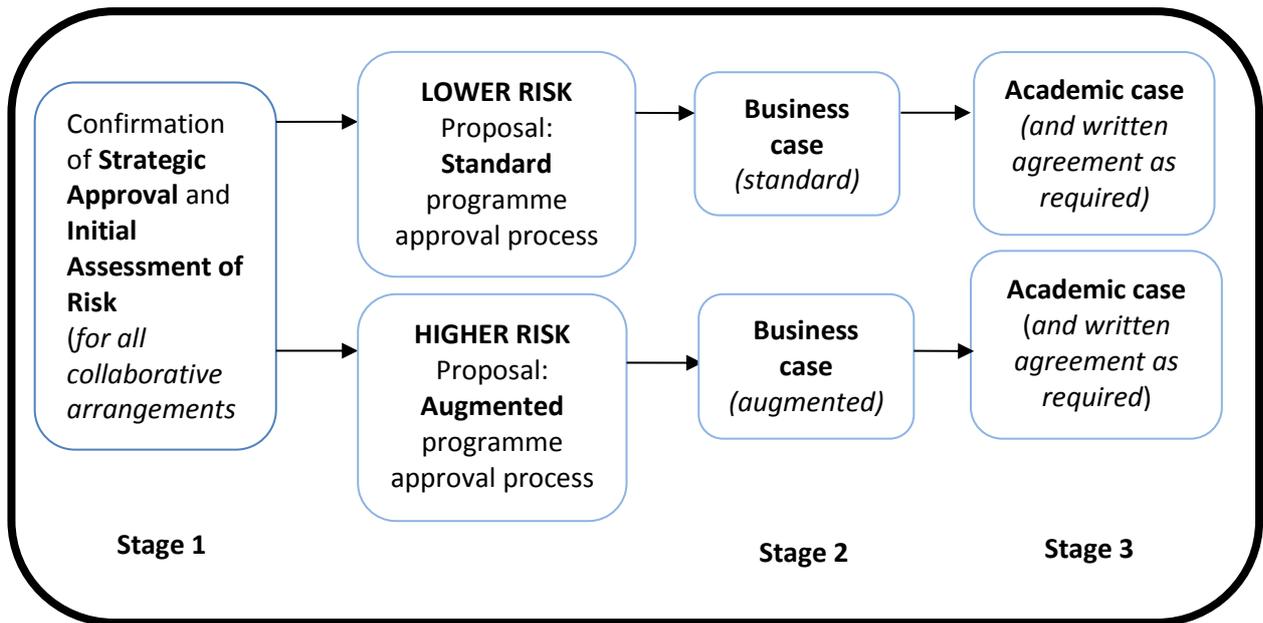
8.2 Legal, financial and academic due diligence checks must form a key part of the approval process.

8.3 All proposals for educational collaborative arrangements are subject to an initial assessment stage. Programmes involving collaborative arrangements must subsequently follow the formal programme approval process, which is either standard or augmented depending on the outcome of the initial assessment.

8.4 Proposals for new educational collaborative arrangements submit to an initial assessment stage. This is designed to (i) confirm that there is a strategic fit and (ii) assign risk to the proposed arrangement using the risk assessment framework. The **Proposal Form – New Educational Collaborative Arrangement** (www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/edpart/) is used for this stage of the process.

8.5 If a proposal passes the initial assessment stage and involves the development of a programme(s), the standard approval process is followed for lower-risk proposals, while those deemed to be higher risk follow an augmented process (as shown in Figure 2). The full approval process is at www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/edpart/.

Figure 2: Summary of approval framework for new educational collaborative arrangements



8.6 Proposals for setting up joint or dual doctoral awards follow a separate approval process which is specified in the Policy on Joint and Dual Doctoral Awards (www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/edpart/). This does not cover externally-funded Doctoral Training Centres/Partnerships, which follow an adapted version of the standard process as set out in Section 8.7.

8.7 If the proposal relates to a bid process for an externally-funded arrangement, the initial risk assessment and strategic approval stage as set out in Figure 1 must be completed before the bid is signed off to ensure that appropriate scrutiny has taken place before an institutional commitment is made. A signed-off bid would also form a *de facto* approved Business Case.

9 The written agreement

9.1 Once a proposal for an educational collaborative arrangement has been approved, a written agreement must be put in place before it becomes active. A written agreement is required for all arrangements.

9.2 The type of agreement required will depend on the nature of the arrangement. For example, this could take the form of a Collaboration Agreement, a letter or a memorandum of understanding (see Annex 1 - Glossary). For collaborations with a lead partner, that partner would normally draft the written agreement in dialogue with its collaborators.

9.3 Where Bristol is not the lead, the Academic Lead must still ensure that the content set out in this Code is included in the written agreement.

9.4 The written agreement will cover, as applicable, *inter alia*: the responsibilities of the collaborating organisations; regulations and quality assurance processes; arrangements for the admission and registration of students; assessment requirements; award arrangements; financial arrangements; and provisions for withdrawal or termination of the agreement, including the discharging of obligations to students in those circumstances. There is a reference list of content that should be included in the written agreement (available from the Academic Quality and Partnerships Office). Collaboration Agreements with insufficient information will be considered incomplete and will not be approved.

9.5 Student admissions and registration arrangements are fundamental to all educational collaborative arrangements. Responsibilities for admissions decisions and management of the admissions process, and with which organisation students will be registered, must be, where applicable, set out in the written agreement.

9.6 All educational collaborative arrangements must be fully costed and accounted for comprehensively with adequate safeguards and contingency plans against financial or other considerations that might compromise academic standards or the quality of learning opportunities. A detailed Financial Memorandum should form part of the written agreement where applicable.

9.7 Expectations concerning the involvement of collaborating organisations in the University's quality assurance procedures must be set out in the written agreement.

9.8 The written agreement must make clear which organisation is responsible for issuing award certificates and transcripts. The University of Bristol must retain control of award certificates and transcripts issues in its name. For joint awards, responsibility for issuing a single certificate is shared. Further information on certificates and transcripts is included in Sections 10.10 and 10.11.

9.9 Arrangements for terminating a collaborative arrangement must be included in the written agreement.

9.10 Collaboration Agreements are put in place for a specified period and must be ratified by the University Education Committee and reported to Senate.

10 Implementation and delivery

The responsibility for delivery

10.1 The Academic Lead has responsibility for overseeing the delivery of an educational collaborative arrangement in accordance with the written agreement. Where a Collaboration Agreement is in place, this should include an annually-updated operating agreement.

Registration, transfer and exit arrangements

- 10.2 Under certain collaborative arrangements, principally those involving joint or dual awards, students may be registered concurrently with more than one awarding body. For postgraduate research arrangements, Section 4.2 of the Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes (www.bris.ac.uk/academic-quality/pg/cop-research-degrees.html) also refers.
- 10.3 There may also be arrangements whereby a student registers with one collaborating organisation before transferring registration to another, for example when moving from the taught component of a doctoral programme to the supervision of the research project at a different organisation.
- 10.4 When setting the admissions and registration processes pertaining to a collaborative arrangement, timely consultation must take place with the relevant Professional Services - including Student Recruitment, Access and Admissions, the Academic Quality and Partnerships Office, and the Bristol Doctoral College for doctoral arrangements - to ensure that these processes are practicable and align with University regulations and procedures.

10.5 It must be clear throughout the programme of study which collaborating organisation has ultimate responsibility for the student, as distinct from the organisation where the student is based at any one time (and where visiting registration arrangements may be made to enable the student to access appropriate facilities).

10.6 It must be clear with which degree-awarding body a student is registered. The University permits that a student may be registered with more than one awarding body, or transfer registration for different stages of their programme of study, where appropriate under particular collaborative arrangements. In all such cases, the relationship of the student to the University and to the other collaborating organisation(s) must be clear - for example in terms of visa sponsorship for international students - and provision must be made for appropriate exit routes for students.

Information requirements

- 10.7 Public information on educational collaborative arrangements, and information for both prospective and current students, must be clear and accurate. This must include details on the roles of the collaborating organisations in terms of teaching, supervision, facilities and other aspects of programme delivery. There must also be an explicit statement on which collaborating organisation will be granting the award and, if required, the status of PSRB accreditation. The responsibilities for producing, approving and monitoring information must be clearly set out.
- 10.8 Current students must receive timely information clarifying their relationship to the organisations involved in the collaborative arrangement; what regulations and procedures apply to them, including for complaints and appeals; their entitlements; and how to access relevant services and support.
- 10.9 Students undertaking a programme delivered at a collaborating organisation that leads to a University of Bristol award must be made aware in all programme and publicity material that they are University of Bristol students and are therefore subject to the University's Rules and Regulations for Students.

Award certificates and transcripts

- 10.10 If a programme leads to a dual award, this must be specified in the award certificate and/or transcript. For joint awards, the certificate must specify all the awarding bodies. For all programmes delivered through collaborative arrangements, the name and location of the collaborating organisations involved in delivery of the programme of study must be included on the certificate and/or transcript. The transcript must state at which collaborating organisation the different elements of the programme were studied.
- 10.11 If the principal language of instruction and/or assessment is not English this must be recorded on the certificate and/or transcript. If information about the language of study or the name and location of the collaborating organisation(s) is recorded on the transcript only, the certificate must refer to the existence of the transcript.

11 Monitoring requirements

- 11.1 All programmes delivered through educational collaborative arrangements are subject to the University's quality assurance procedures. The Academic Lead has responsibility for this requirement, with support from the relevant Faculty Education Manager and the Academic Quality and Partnerships Office.

- 11.2 The Academic Lead is responsible for ensuring that quality assurance procedures for educational collaborative arrangements are in place, and that collaborating partners are appropriately involved in these procedures.
- 11.3 All programmes delivered through educational collaborative arrangements are subject to Annual Programme Review (APR) and to the relevant Faculty Quality Enhancement Team (FQET).

- 11.4 The APR policy and report templates include specific directions for the reviewing of programmes delivered through educational collaborative arrangements (www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/facultyadvice/progreview/).

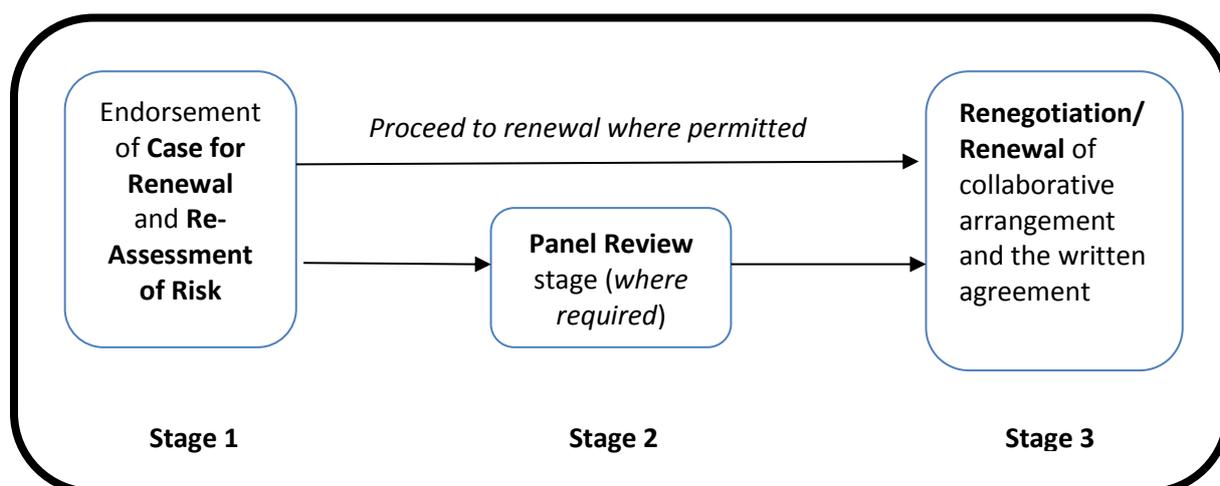
12 Periodic review and renegotiation/renewal

- 12.1 All educational collaborative arrangements are subject to a periodic review process. This process must include refreshed due diligence checks and the reassessment of risk. Arrangements can only be renewed once the review has been satisfactorily concluded.

- 12.2 All educational collaborative arrangements submit to an initial risk reassessment stage using the **Periodic Review and Reassessment Form** (www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/edpart/). Arrangements deemed to require enhanced scrutiny will then also be subject to a Panel Review stage before the renegotiation/renewal of the arrangement can take place (see Figure 3). The full periodic review process is at www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/edpart/. University-level scrutiny of the review process is carried out by the Educational Partnerships Evaluation Group with oversight by the University Academic Quality and Standards Committee and University Education Committee.

- 12.3 In the case of an externally-funded arrangement, the initial risk reassessment stage as set out in Figure 3 must be completed before any re-bid is signed off. Any additional scrutiny required by the University must also be undertaken before a renewed institutional commitment is made.

Figure 3: Summary of periodic review framework for educational collaborative arrangements



- 12.4 Following the reassessment of risk, arrangements deemed to require enhanced scrutiny must complete a formal panel review process before the renegotiation/renewal of the arrangement can take place.
- 12.5 For arrangements that have a Collaboration Agreement, review will normally occur one year before the arrangement is due for renewal, unless otherwise stated in the agreement or deemed necessary for other reasons.
- 12.6 The Academic Lead is responsible for leading on the periodic review process.
- 12.7 Taught programmes delivered through educational collaborative arrangements will also be subject to the Curriculum Review and Development (CRD) process.

13 Termination of educational collaborative arrangements

- 13.1 The provisions for terminating an educational collaborative arrangement must be included in the written agreement. Proposals for termination or non-renewal of arrangements must be scrutinised by the University External Partnership Review Group before being confirmed.
- 13.2 Where a collaborative arrangement is being terminated, appropriate provision must be made for students, staff and resources during the final year(s) of its operation. This provision must be set out in an exit strategy, which describes how suitable support and guidance will be given to students.