

Higher Education  
**Collaborative Provision Handbook**

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## Introduction

This document aims to provide information for The London Institute of Banking & Finance (LIBF) and partner staff about LIBF's management of HE collaborations. This handbook will enable colleagues to:

- familiarise themselves with the process for approving and renewing collaborations
- understand the type of arrangements possible with LIBF
- recognise LIBF's procedures for approving the delivery of collaborative programmes
- access further guidance in relation to the management of collaborative provision
- locate templates to be used for the processes associated with the approval of partners and collaborative delivery

This handbook should be used in conjunction with the LIBF Code of Practice for Quality Assurance (particularly Chapter 14), LIBF's General and Academic Regulations, QAA's The UK Quality Code for Higher Education and external reference points as appropriate.

In setting up new arrangements or renewing existing arrangements there are both external and internal requirements to consider before seeking final approval for a formal partnership.

## External Requirements

### QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education

LIBF has overall responsibility for the academic standards of awards granted in its name. It is paramount that we design and implement appropriate policy and procedure to safeguard standards and assure the quality and enhancement of learning opportunities. To do this effectively, we must take account of external reference points set out by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA).

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is the Designated Quality Body (DQB) appointed by the UK's Higher Education regulator, The Office for Student, to monitor and advise on standards and quality in UK higher education. The UK Quality Code for Higher Education (The Quality Code) ensures that academic standards and academic quality arrangements are aligned with national higher education expectations.

The Quality Code details two expectations in relation to Partnerships:

1. Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.
2. Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them.

QAA also conducts reviews of institutions as well as reviews of in-country activity, the outcomes of which are made available to all stakeholders. QAA reports highlight good practice and contain recommendations to help improve quality.

### In-country approval processes

Some international collaboration requires local government approval, which can be at institutional or course level or both. It is the responsibility of the partner to lead this process. However, LIBF recognises that it may have a part to play in providing relevant information and evidence to satisfy local requirements. All parties need to be mindful of the timeframe of approval as the process of

obtaining this approval varies from country to country. In some cases, it can be protracted, particularly during times of government changeover, while with others it is a relatively “light touch” approach. LIBF should always be provided with full copies of any documentation submitted in relation to seeking local regulatory approval for the delivery of one of its programmes by a partner. Partners should provide LIBF with copies of all correspondence confirming local approval and any caveats.

### **Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs)**

A number of LIBF courses are accredited or endorsed by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRB). It is LIBF’s responsibility to ensure that the approval of a course to be delivered collaboratively meets the requirements of a PSRB. In the case of overseas collaborations, accreditation by a UK PSRB can be superseded by local more relevant accreditation. In some instances, accreditation or endorsement by a PSRB does not extend to a course delivered collaboratively. The Managing Director, Higher Education is responsible for liaising with the relevant PSRB regarding these matters.

## **Internal Requirements**

### **LIBF Strategy**

All new and existing collaborations must align to the strategy and vision of LIBF. Before putting a proposal forward it is important to consider how the collaboration will contribute to achieving the strategic themes of the current Strategy and embrace our values.

#### **Our Vision**

To be an internationally recognised organisation delivering outstanding financial education

#### **Our Strategic Themes**

- We will deliver highly regarded and distinctive degree programmes and professional qualifications
- We will support the development of those who aspire to work in financial services
- We will enhance financial skills and capability and broaden our outreach
- We will produce research and thought leadership

#### **Our Values**

- Listening and Learning
- Innovation
- Support
- Transparency
- Collaboration

## **Types of Arrangements**

There are a number of different types of relationships that we can enter into with external bodies within the UK and overseas. It is therefore important to establish at an early stage exactly what type of relationship will be developed.

In addition to Collaborative Arrangements for the provision of Higher Education, LIBF also has a wide range of other study pathways including programmes from within our Professional Education (PE), Executive Education and Schools programmes that can be delivered in collaboration with other organisations.

Our Relationship Directors will work with prospective partners in the first instance to ensure we clearly understand how our programmes can meet the needs that partners have identified and to create a sound and thorough proposal.

Our definitions of the following types of arrangements provide a framework by which we can describe a proposal for collaboration:

## HE arrangements:

- **Sub-contracted;** An LIBF programme or award which is designed, assessed and quality assured by LIBF but delivered, in full or in part, by an approved partner institution. Students on a sub-contracted arrangement will usually have a direct contractual relationship with LIBF as the awarding body.
- **Joint awards;** A programme and award is jointly designed, delivered and assessed by LIBF and the approved partner. The student receives one joint award on successful completion of the programme.
- **Dual awards;** a programme of study which leads to two separate independent qualifications, one from LIBF and one from a partner. The programme of study is collaboratively designed, delivered and/or assessed or consists of two awards that have been linked by collaborative activity. Each institution is ultimately responsible for the quality assurance of their own award. Students will receive an award from both partners on successful completion of both partners requirements or from one partner where only one partners requirements have been met (i.e. it may be possible to exit with one of the two awards)
- **Validated;** A programme designed, developed and approved by either LIBF or by a partner that is delivered in full or in part, by an approved partner institution. Students studying on the programme will normally have a direct contractual relationship with the partner that delivers the course rather than LIBF, which has validated the award and its proposed delivery.
- **Articulation agreements;** A pre-formalised agreement where by a cohort of students who satisfy academic criteria on one programme (delivered and awarded by an external provider) are entitled (on academic grounds) to be admitted with advanced standing to a subsequent stage of a programme of another degree-awarding body. Full requirements for articulation are detailed within each articulation agreement.
- **Accreditation of other's education programmes;** Recognition of an organisations education programme as being of a suitable quality and where the content and level provide an appropriate match to LIBF's modules to warrant the provision of credits to an LIBF award.

## Professional Education (PE) / Financial Capability (FC) arrangements:

- **Accredited Learning Support Provider:** For training providers that want our recognition for the training they provide.
- **Trusted Partner:** Reserved for strategic partnerships as identified by the LIBF. Trusted Partners may also act as training providers or centres but there may be additional activities as part of the contractual agreement.
- **Approved Centres (PE/FC):** Institutions delivering a qualification regulated by Ofqual (et al). Traditionally schools / colleges delivering our Financial Capability qualifications, however now being extended to those delivering our Corporate & Professional qualifications.
- **PE Accreditation:** Recognition of an organisation's education programme as being of suitable quality. Where the content and level provide an appropriate match to part or all of a LIBF Professional Education award, credits and/or exemptions can be provided.

This handbook focuses on Higher Education collaborative provision, for further details on other Partnerships with LIBF please see the International section on our website.

## **Institutional Approval**

The process by which LIBF approves and re-approves partnerships is set out in Chapter 14: Collaborative Provision of LIBF's Code of Practice. Any external body that LIBF wishes to enter into an arrangement with to deliver collaborative provision, leading to an award or credit of LIBF, must be formally approved by LIBF through a process of Institutional Validation.

Institutional Validation is a process whereby LIBF assures itself of an external body's suitability to deliver programmes and support students in an equivalent way to LIBF's own practices and in line with the quality assurance standards LIBF follows.

## **Proposal Scoping**

For all types of arrangements a Proposal Scoping document must be completed initially by the relevant LIBF Relationship Director that outlines the proposal and provides key information for QPR to undertake initial high-level due diligence. The initial proposal is reviewed by LIBF senior officers and approval for the proposal to be further developed is sought from LIBF Business Heads.

## **Non-Disclosure / Memorandum of Understanding**

A non-disclosure agreement (NDA) and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) should also be signed at this initial point in discussions to facilitate both parties engaging in open and frank discussions about the type and value of potential arrangements.

Initial due diligence, a signed NDA and MOU are required regardless of whether or not a proposal proceeds to further development.

## **Partner Application / Proposal Development**

Following receipt of approval from LIBF Business Heads to proceed, a process of further refining the proposal is undertaken.

The proposed partner organisation will be sent a Proposal for a Collaborative Agreement form which seeks the information LIBF requires to process an application for partnering along with a number of supporting documents to support full due diligence checks.

Detailed Business and Academic Cases are developed by the programme team, Quality, Policy & Regulation (QPR), the International Team or the relevant Relationship Development Director based on the information provided by the partner and due diligence checks.

During the development stage of the process, the details of how the arrangement will work are considered and agreed by the parties, this should include clarifying the programme and delivery structure to be used, proposed start and session dates, local regulatory requirements, and completion of the Roles & Responsibilities template.

## **Business Case**

Based on the proposal scoping and development work underway, the Relationship Development Director and/or the Managing Director, Higher Education will complete the Business Case

template and include details of how the arrangement will fit LIBF's strategic goals along with potential costs, benefits and risks of the proposed arrangement from the business and financial perspective.

QPR will include a statement within the business case on the legal and financial checks undertaken as part of the due diligence process to date.

The Business Case is considered by Business Heads for approval.

### **Academic Case**

The relevant programme team and QPR will complete the Academic Case template and include details of how it is proposed the arrangement will fulfil academic quality assurance requirements including all aspects of teaching, learning and student support. Assurance of a partner's ability to implement quality standard requirements will be further assessed as part of the validation event.

QPR will provide a statement on the due diligence undertaken to date and potential quality assurance risks as part of the case presented.

The Academic Case is presented to the Academic Standards & Quality Committee for endorsement.

The Business and the Academic cases are reviewed independently to ensure that all aspects of the provision – academic quality and financial sustainability are given due and independent consideration. For a proposal to proceed to a validation event, both cases must receive approval or endorsement from their respective committees.

### **Initial Due Diligence**

On receipt of the Proposal Scoping document, QPR will coordinate initial due diligence checks on the prospective partner. QPR will arrange for LIBF's Chief Financial Officer and Company Secretary to review any financial and legal documentation received.

Due diligence checks include the review of details of the proposed partner's institutional operations, their strategic objectives and how these align with those of LIBF. In addition, checks will be undertaken on the organisations standing as a business and as an educational establishment, for example:

- Legal status of the proposed partner
- Accreditation and approval of the proposed partner by regulatory bodies
- Outcomes of external reviews by organisations such as quality assurance agencies
- The status of the proposed partner in relation to degree awarding powers

This initial due diligence will be completed for all types of arrangements and a summary statement on initial due diligence checks will be included in both the Business and Academic Cases considered by Business Heads and the Academic Standards & Quality Committee.

### **Enhanced Due Diligence and risk assessment**

During the application and development stage of the process, QPR will coordinate enhanced due diligence checks and risk assessment. These checks will include details of the Partner's reputation and its capability to enter into a contractual relationship with LIBF.

Additional detailed checks will be made on the organisation's relationships with other collaborative partners, and academic and financial matters, for example:



- Checking the proposed Partner is well established and has a good standing with other academic institutions
- Assessing the organisational structure and any related parent companies or subsidiaries
- For overseas Partners checking if approval by relevant government departments is a requirement
- Assessing the proposed Partner's Quality Assurance, policies and procedures along with their current financial status by checking audited accounts.

This enhanced due diligence checklist and risk assessment form will be completed for all types of collaborative provision and will be signed off as part of the approval of the Business and Academic cases.

## **Intelligence Report**

As part of the enhanced due diligence checks and risk assessment intelligence reports on overseas territories are sought. These reports contain both general information on the current political and economic stability of a given country along with specific information on the provision of higher education and local regulatory requirements in the country in question. While enhanced due diligence checks will be undertaken on all prospective partner organisations, intelligence reports for prospective UK-based partners will not be sought.

Sources of intelligence reports can include (but are not limited to):

- Quality Assurance of Cross-border Higher Education
  - <https://qache.wordpress.com/>
- British Council – Higher Education
  - <https://www.britishcouncil.org/education/ihe>
- Transparency International – Corruptions Perceptions Index
  - <http://www.transparency.org/>
- UNESCO TVET Database
  - <http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/go.php?q=UNEVOC+Resources>

Following approval by Business Heads and the Academic Standards & Quality Committee for a validation event to be undertaken, QPR will make arrangements for a validation panel to be convened and for a validation event to be held.

## **Validation Event**

Validation will normally consist of an on-site visit by a panel appointed by LIBF to inspect the providers facilities and onsite arrangements, where partnership programmes will be delivered remotely or travel is restricted, a virtual event may be convened. The event will meet the proposed partner's:

- senior management,
- programme management,
- lecturers,
- students; and
- support service staff as appropriate to the arrangement.

Where an onsite visit by the validation team is not feasible but a representative of, or someone appointed to act on the behalf of LIBF has visited the proposed site of delivery and can confirm facilities and arrangements are as proposed, a virtual validation event may be agreed by the Registrar, Quality, Policy & Regulation. Agreement for a virtual validation event to take place will be proportionate to risk and consider information obtained during the due diligence process. Please see the Virtual Validation section.

QPR will liaise with the proposed partner organisation regarding a suitable date for the event and create the agenda for the required meetings. The agenda will usually consist of a series of meetings with the above groups and include a site visit / virtual tour for the panel to all proposed teaching locations/online platforms used and to view any teaching facilities, library and student support facilities the organisation will provide to students studying on the agreed programmes.

The QPR manager will produce a report on behalf of the panel recommending whether or not the collaborative arrangement should be approved and whether this should be subject to any conditions and/or recommendations. The panel's report and recommendation will be presented to LIBF's Academic Board who will decide if validation is granted and under what conditions, if any.

## **Validation Panel**

The event is undertaken by a panel that will be comprised of:

- A validation panel Chair
- a QPR representative who will act as secretary for the event,
- at least one Faculty representative,
- an external panel member, who fulfils LIBF's independence criteria for externals,
- and other identified persons as appropriate.

## **Programme Team**

In addition to the validation panel, LIBF and the proposed partner will usually have been liaising via a designated LIBF Link Manager and it may be appropriate for this person to attend the validation event, however, they will act as a link in the process and will not sit on the validation panel or participate in the validation panels private deliberations.

## **Approval of Collaborative Delivery**

### **Overview**

A partner organisation must have Institutional Validation and courses Validated by LIBF before the delivery of courses can commence. In addition, the provider must have addressed any conditions that may have been set down as part of either institutional or programme validation.

A programme of study is often included as part of the initial institutional validation proposal and validation of this programme and the institution, in this instance, will be undertaken simultaneously. However, should a validated partner propose to add additional programmes to those they wish to deliver or make significant changes to a validated programme, the institution and programme will be subject to:

- Due diligence (see above and proportionate to risk)
- Venue Check (if required)
- New Course Proposal and Approval
- Validation or Re-validation (if required)
- Approval or Re-approval of Collaborative Delivery

Any new modules required to 'contextualise' a programme for a specific market (eg including a module on local law), should be reviewed and considered via the processes detailed in The London Institute of Banking & Finance's Code of Practice for Quality Assurance, Chapter 13: Programme Development, Approval, Monitoring and Review. If the contextualisation of a course proposed for collaborative delivery will be achieved during the delivery, eg, via the contextualisation of case studies and assessments, rather than via modification to the course, a Validation event will not be required. Under such circumstances, the definitive course documentation will be updated to

include reference to the collaborative iteration of the course. LIBF retains authority to approve any modifications to courses and learning and teaching resources and materials.

It is a fundamental requirement of LIBF that any activity in relation to the advertising or delivery of The London Institute of Banking & Finance's Higher Education programmes or programmes validated by The London Institute of Banking & Finance have undergone appropriate review via a validation event and been approved by The London Institute of Banking & Finance's Academic Board. In addition, all Higher Education collaborative provision arrangements must be supported by a signed contractual agreement between the parties.

The purpose of validation, approval and contractual arrangements are for The London Institute of Banking & Finance to be assured of the following:

### **Quality of Learning Opportunities**

That the partner organisation is able to and continues to provide learning opportunities equivalent to that of comparable courses delivered by LIBF. This will include consideration as to whether the staffing body is appropriately qualified and able to deliver the course to the standard of the award.

### **Quality assurance**

That appropriate arrangements are and remain in place to enable quality assurance, control and enhancement mechanisms to be effective.

### **Student support**

That the staffing body is appropriately qualified and able to deliver the required level of support to students and that the level of support required is appropriate to the achievement of the learning outcomes for the award.

### **Written agreement**

That appropriate written agreements will be in place which specify clearly the mutual arrangements and obligations upon each party.

### **Provisions for the admission of students**

That the arrangements for the admission of students onto collaborative provision programmes are subject to the validated entry requirements and subject to the awarding bodies regulations and requirements.

### **Overseas provision**

In the case of overseas provision where approval of an overseas government, agency or department is required for delivery of a UK course, that is obtained and continues to be in place prior to registration of the students and delivery of the course.

Any programme that has not received full validation from LIBF or is awaiting local regulatory approval should not be advertised to potential students unless there is specific approval given by LIBF and the local regulator to do so, and then only if the advertising is approved in writing by LIBF and makes clear that the programme is on offer 'Subject to validation'.

## Approval Process

### Pre-Approval processes

When scheduling events, consideration should be given to the pre- and post-event processes, in order to ensure there is plenty of time for these to take place. It is also worth considering the schedule in terms of LIBF and partner processes, such as registration and enrolment windows, local regulatory requirements, marketing requirements, planned assessment boards and graduation and that pre- and post- events align with both staff availability and fitting in with scheduled committee meetings. Academic and local holiday periods should also be accounted for in planning validation events to ensure both LIBF and partner staff members are available to attend meetings.

### Programme teams

An LIBF programme team should be convened at an early stage of the development of the proposal to liaise with the partner and QPR in order to co-ordinate the collation and writing of documentation for the event. The programme team will be responsible for ensuring staff at the partner institution are aware of and understand the Approval of Collaborative Delivery process as well as helping to guide the partner through the LIBF regulations and processes that will need to be followed and how the partner will need to demonstrate compliance with these regulations and processes in order to meet the quality assurance standards LIBF will seek assurance of during validation.

### Validation Event

QPR will coordinate the event in conjunction with the programme team and partner, including the appointment of a panel to consider Approval of Collaborative Delivery. QPR is also responsible for scheduling the date of the event and notifying the relevant parties.

The duration of a Validation event will be determined by the type of validation sought and other factors such as the number and location of delivery sites and the availability of staff, academics and students to participate in the event.

Generally, a validation event will take place over a full day, with key staff being asked to remain available for a further day should the validation panel seek clarification on any points from the previous day; the meetings run over time and/or visits to a number of different delivery locations be required.

### Validation Panel

Approval and Re-approval of Collaboration delivery is undertaken by a Panel. QPR oversees the appointment of the panel which includes the following:

- **Chair** (not associated with the provision under consideration for approval). The role of Chair will usually be undertaken by a senior LIBF staff member or external colleagues with knowledge of LIBF and prior chairing experience.
- **Internal Panel Members** are selected from The London Institute of Banking & Finance faculty and are required to have experience of delivering programmes within the context of The London Institute of Banking & Finance's policies and regulations.
- **Quality, Policy & Regulation Manager** the QPR Manager will act as event secretary and a panel member. The QPR manager will ensure a formal record of the event is produced in

the form of a Validation Report ensuring that it accurately reflects the outcomes of the event so that appropriate action can be taken to follow up any conditions or recommendations imposed by the Panel. In addition, the QPR Manager will provide support to the Chair in relation to regulatory matters to ensure that the panel have considered a full range of issues relating to the delivery of the LIBF course to students including but not limited to:

- Student support entitlements based on the type of partnership proposed
  - Quality assurance processes
  - Regulatory considerations
  - Cross reference to information reported via the due diligence
  - Consideration of any local regulatory or approval processes to be undertaken
- 
- **External panel members** - QPR selects the external panel members from among those proposed by the Programme Team. External panel members should be academics and be experienced in the financial services sector and/or the delivery of Higher Education programmes with collaborative partners.
  - **Student representative** – an LIBF student representative should sit on the validation panel for UK-based validations and where feasible, on international validation events.

### **Document required for a validation event**

The Panel will receive the following documentation at least four (4) weeks prior to the event which will take place at the partner organisation premises or remotely:

- Event programme, including details of attendees at meetings
- Panel details
- Completed partner application form
- Self-evaluation document completed by the partner and the programme team
- Programme Specification(s)\*
- Module Specifications\*
- Partner academic policy and procedural documents
- Curriculum Mapping Checklist (for articulation)\* – if applicable
- Evidence of approval of regulatory or admissions exceptions
- Staff CVs\*

\*Only required where a programme validation is included in the event

QPR will also hold copies of the following documents that will not be circulated to the panel:

- Confirmation of approval from Business Heads and ASQC of approval to go to validation
- Due diligence checklist
- Confirmation of local regulatory and legal requirements confirming the partners right to collaborate in the delivery of HE programmes in the country of delivery
- Business Case and Academic Case approval

### **Format of the Validation event**

The format of the event will be dependent on the nature of the partnership being considered and will be proportionate depending on the types of courses to be delivered.

The event should include the following:

- Onsite tour of facilities:
  - consideration of teaching spaces

- library, social and personal study space
- specialist facilities required for the course (e.g., labs)
- leisure facilities
- or demonstration of online learning environment/s
- student support
- consideration of teaching staff, including review of CV's and meeting with representatives of teaching staff
- meetings with the management team to consider the allocation of resources and commitment of the partner to the collaborative delivery
- meeting with current students of the partner from equivalent level / fields of study where possible.

### **Outcome of validation event**

A validation panel, having undertaken the validation event, will make a recommendation to the Academic Board regarding whether or not the partner and/or programme should be validated for delivery as proposed. The validation panel may:

- Recommended to Academic Board that the collaborative arrangement is approved.
- Recommended to Academic Board that the collaborative arrangement is approved with specified conditions and/or recommendations.
- Recommended to Academic Board that the collaborative arrangement is not approved.

On occasion, an institutional validation and a programme validation event may be held concurrently. In these circumstances, the validation panel should make separate recommendations regarding the suitability of the institution to deliver a programme from the recommendations on the suitability of the programme/s under consideration. For example, in the case of a 'Validation arrangement' it may arise that while an institution meets the required quality assurance standards, the proposed programme may not or vice versa.

### **Academic Board approval**

Academic Board approves collaborative arrangements and may or may not take on the recommendations of the validation panel. Academic Board may also add to or amend any recommendations or conditions proposed by the validation panel.

### **Approval of new/additional delivery locations**

Should an approved Partner move to new premises and/or wish to deliver a course at a location other than the delivery location originally approved, this will normally be approved via a venue visit undertaken by a member(s) of LIBF staff and/or QPR or by a local representative appointed by LIBF. The venue visit will result in the completion of a Venue Visit report, which will be presented to ASQC for formal approval of the new delivery location.

Should the proposal to relocate to new premises or introduce an additional delivery site include any of the following, the proposal may be subject to the Partner Re-approval process and/or a full Validation process:

- Changes to the course management or governance structure
- Changes to the legal entity which has responsibility for the provision
- Changes to the country or legal jurisdiction of operation
- Substantial changes or additions to the teaching team
- Significant changes to resource requirements in different, additional subject areas to be taught.

There are some instances where a visit by the validation panel to the partner's delivery location is not required and the approval process can take place at an alternate location with partner staff present. This could be where a partner is only providing virtual resources such as a VLE or online learning resources and either no onsite visit is required or a visit by a member of the LIBF IT or Learning Resources and Libraries team is most appropriate to ensure the suitability of virtual resources.

QPR will advise on the required process on a case-by-case basis.

## **Post Event**

### **a) Confirmation and Completion of Outcomes from Visit**

QPR will draft the validation report which will include any conditions, recommendations and commendations noted by the validation panel. The draft report will be circulated to the validation panel for agreement before being sent to the partner for factual accuracy checks.

On receipt of confirmation of factual accuracy from the partner institution the programme team and the partner will be asked to work together to create an Action Plan to address any conditions and recommendations proposed by the validation team.

The validation report and drafted Action Plan will be presented to the next Academic Board meeting where approval of the arrangement will be sought.

## **Guidance for Re-approval of Collaborative Delivery**

All partner organisations approved for collaborative delivery are subject to Re-approval of Collaborative Delivery, within a maximum period of five years. Re-validation is an additional requirement to the ongoing annual monitoring process required of any active partner.

The purpose of the Re-approval of Collaborative Delivery is to assure LIBF that the quality of the course offered at an approved partner remains equivalent to those of comparable courses delivered at LIBF and that the collaborating body has met and continues to meet its obligations as set out in the written agreement.

In Re-approving Collaborative Delivery LIBF is looking to an approved partner organisation to demonstrate that it can continue to appropriately manage and deliver that course.

Re-approval of Collaborative Delivery includes a critical appraisal of all resources which will be reviewed by an LIBF panel and who will, re-visit the partner organisation to ensure the approved partner is able to maintain and enhance academic standards on the validated course leading to awards of LIBF.

Where Partner Re-approval is required, there must be a clear separation of processes prior to the Re-approval of Collaborative Delivery of the course to allow for due consideration of partner and course level issues.

A Re-approval of Collaborative Delivery involves some reflection of the initial period of approval in the form of a critical appraisal. For example:

- the continuing availability of staff and physical resources
- current research and practice in the application of knowledge in the relevant discipline(s), technological advances, and developments in teaching and learning
- changes to in-country requirements
- changes in student demand, employer expectations and employment opportunities

- student feedback, including the partner level data and module evaluation
- PSRB accreditations
- curriculum review outcomes
- employability rates

## Virtual Validation

In some instances, LIBF may agree to undertake a validation event via virtual or hybrid (part online/part onsite) means. By applying a risk-based approach, an event via virtual means is considered appropriate, provided that:

- the partner has been visited by a member of LIBF staff within 6 months of the proposed validation or a representative appointed by LIBF visits the prospective partner and can verify the availability and sustainability of the teaching and learning facilities available at all proposed teaching sites; and
- No matters have arisen from the due diligence process that indicate an increased potential for unmitigated risks in undertaking the partnership

In addition to the above, the following criteria may be used to assess the appropriateness of a virtual visit:

- Due to WHO or government recommendations, travel to or from the partnership site is prohibited or advised against but progression of the arrangement is deemed strategically important to LIBF and/or the partner
- As a result of a proposed change to the collaborative model, (for example from Sub-contracted to Shared delivery), in which the course will operate and thus the associated access rights of collaborative students to LIBF's virtual learning environment change.
- Where a provider has already been validated to deliver a L6 top-up and is seeking to deliver L4 or L5 of a course, provided the additional levels will be taught by the same staff team and no additional specialist resources are required for the delivery of L4 or L5.
- A new course that replaces a course which has been withdrawn from LIBF's portfolio or whose curriculum has undergone modifications through Validation and end of cycle review/re-validation. This applies if the curriculum of the new course closely maps to the curriculum of the withdrawn course and the new course does not require any different or additional specialist resources. The extent of change must be evidenced through a mapping exercise undertaken by the programme team, reviewed by QPR and approved by ASQC and LTC.

For Approval of Collaborative Arrangements via virtual/hybrid means to take place, LIBF must have sufficient reassurance, through completion of an up to date annual report and/or recent visits undertaken by LIBF staff, of the suitability of the partner's physical facilities and resources to deliver higher education.

In addition, supporting documentary evidence is consistent with a face-to-face event and is disseminated to the panel four weeks in advance to enable review prior to the event. All Approval of Collaborative Arrangement events irrespective of the model are serviced by members of QPR.

## Written agreement

All LIBF partnership agreements should be in the form of a written and legally binding agreement or contract setting out the rights and obligations of the parties and signed by the authorised representatives of the awarding institution and the partner institution or agent.



The contractual agreement is drawn up using information contained within the Partner Application Form, information gained at Validation and the Due Diligence checklist with respect to planned student numbers, number of intakes and agreed financial arrangements.

For collaborative provision, there is one agreement known as the Collaborative Provision Agreement. The agreement sets out the legal and financial as well as the operational and academic aspects of the provision. It contains a number of schedules that are updated on an annual basis and determines payments between parties and relevant roles and responsibilities. Once signed, the parties are then bound by the terms of the agreements for the term of the agreement. However, each agreement has provisions for early termination. Should this be required, then colleagues are advised to speak to QPR in order to discuss the options available.

All signed agreements are retained by the Company Secretary with copies kept by QPR on the Collaborative Provision drive.

## **Monitoring and Oversight of Collaborative Provision**

Partnerships and collaborative provision are managed by the programme team with quality assurance overseen by QPR. QPR and the programme team provide updates to the Academic Partnerships Risk Advisory Group (APRAG) on a regular basis with APRAG minutes being made available at each Academic Board meeting and a formal Report presented to Academic Board annually. APRAG monitors the progress of actions arising from collaborative provision validation and review events and oversees the ongoing development and progress of collaborative arrangements.

When considering pursuing a new partnership or collaboration, please contact a member of QPR to discuss the proposal in more detail. Organisational needs and demands can vary significantly, and it is important to discuss how the potential collaboration can be progressed in accordance with LIBF regulations before commitments are made.

## **Institutional level**

Academic standards in collaborative provision are monitored and overseen through LIBF's committee framework. Academic Board and its committees are responsible for overseeing the management and enhancement of quality and standards across LIBF with Academic Board holding the ultimate authority on matters relating to Collaborative Arrangements.

Activity in proposing and validating partnerships are reported to the Board of Governors.

Academic Partnerships Risk Advisory Group LIBF's Academic Partnerships Risk Advisory Group (APRAG) meet routinely throughout the academic year with responsibility for risk assessment and oversight of collaborative provision across LIBF. APRAG monitor and review actions arising from validation and from ongoing engagement with partners as they deliver the validated programmes. The full terms of reference for APRAG is available upon request from QPR.

## **Forms**

The following templates are available from QPR and should be used for documenting each stage of the proposal, development and approval of an arrangement:

- Non-disclosure Agreement (NDA)
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
- Proposal Scoping
- Collaborative Provision Application Form
- Roles and Responsibilities document
- Business Case

- Academic Case
- Self-Evaluation document
- Contingency Plan
- Validation Report
- Validation Action Plan
- Statement of CP Support Services
- HE Collaborative Partner Annual Monitoring

## Appendix 1

### Glossary

- **Academic Board** means The London Institute of Banking & Finance Academic Board, which retains ultimate authority to approve all collaborative arrangements. The Academic Board will set conditions for the appointment of collaborative partners, approve the appointment of new collaborative partners and approve the ongoing appointment of existing collaborative partners. The Academic Board may delegate operational oversight of some elements of collaborative partner arrangements to its deliberative committees and groups, including but not limited to, The London Institute of Banking & Finance Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC), Academic Standards and Quality Committee (ASQC) and Academic Partnerships Risk Advisory Group (APRAG).
- **Academic Standards & Quality Committee (ASQC)** means The London Institute of Banking & Finance's deliberative committee that acts under delegated authority from the Academic Board to secure the standards, and enable the academic quality of The London Institute of Banking & Finance's higher education awards.
- **Agent** means an individual, company or other organisation providing services on a commercial basis to provide students and other stakeholders with information on a programme of study or to help prospective students gain places on study programmes.
- **Code of Practice** means The London Institute of Banking & Finance's Code of Practice for Quality Assurance and the policies referred to in the Code of Practice.
- **Cohort** means each intake of students onto a level and mode of study.
- **Collaborative Partner** means an institution that has been validated by LIBF to collaborate in the delivery of teaching towards an LIBF award.
- **Collaborative Partner Agreement** means a written and legally binding agreement or contract setting out the rights and obligations of the parties and signed by the authorised representatives of LIBF and the partner in respect of commercial terms, delivery, monitoring, review, enhancement and modification of the provision.
- **Collaborative Partner Application Form** means the application form completed by prospective Collaborative Partners and including information on the nature and intent of the proposed relationship and initial documentation for due diligence.
- **Collaborative Partner Fee** means a fee payable to LIBF for LIBF's roles and responsibilities as detailed within the signed Collaborative Partnership agreement and payable by the Collaborative Partner as per the terms set out in the collaborative partner agreement.
- **Collaborative Partner Support Services** means the provision of educational and support services by the Collaborative Partner for each Programme listed in the collaborative partner agreement.
- **Collaborative Partner Study Period** means the period during which the Collaborative Partner provides a structured programme of study.
- **Collaborative provision** is educational provision leading to an award, or to specific credit toward an award, of LIBF delivered and/or supported and/or assessed through an agreement with a collaborating body. LIBF may collaborate with other bodies in the United Kingdom or overseas to offer Courses or part of a Course leading to an award of The London Institute of Banking & Finance.

- **Conditions** means requirements set by a validation panel and agreed by LIBF's Academic Board that must be met prior to a validated programme commencing. Conditions are to be included on an Action Plan and progress against the achievement of the conditions will be overseen and signed off by LIBF's Academic Standards & Quality Committee (ASQC) on delegated authority from the Academic Board. A programme of study may not commence being delivered by a collaborative partner until all conditions are met and signed off by ASQC.
- **Due Diligence** - is the name given to the process of considering the financial, legal, academic and reputational risks inherent in any proposed collaborative provision.
- **Flying Faculty** means an arrangement whereby a Module or part of a Module is delivered by staff from LIBF either virtually or in person at the premises of the collaborative partner.
- **Regulations** means LIBF's General and Academic Regulations for Students and the policies which support these regulations, which all Students must adhere to during their programme of study.
- **Business Heads** is responsible for the strategic planning and direction of The London Institute of Banking & Finance and approval of the business case for any proposed collaborative arrangements.
- **Learning & Teaching Committee (LTC)** is responsible for monitoring, and assuring the continuous enhancement of the quality of student learning opportunities; monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the underpinning systems and procedures; and for advising the Academic Board as appropriate.
- **Lecturers** mean the Collaborative Partner staff responsible for delivering tuition whether face-to-face, online or via any other agreed and validated method, and providing regular access to subject expertise throughout a programme of study.
- **Link Manager** the LIBF person appointed to be responsible for overseeing the ongoing effective operations of the delivery of a course delivered collaboratively.
- **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** is a non-binding, non-exclusive agreement with a partner organisation. This sets out a statement of intent but does not commit either body to specific outcomes. Any programme-level arrangements subsequently approved will require an appropriate agreement.
- **Module** means a component part of a Programme of study leading to an award, which carries an identifiable number of credits leading to the award.
- **Module Specification** - This is the standardised format for detailing the content of a module.
- **Programme** means a formal programme of study, normally consisting of a defined number of Modules leading to an educational award.
- **Programme Specification** - This is the standardised format for detailing the content of a programme of study.
- **Quality, Policy & Regulation (QPR)** QPR works closely with LIBF programme teams to provide support and guidance on the processes for establishing and maintaining collaborative arrangements within LIBF's quality assurance framework. QPR arranges validation events and ensures arrangements progress through the deliberative committee structures. QPR provides

institutional oversight reports, as appropriate and ensures arrangements adhere to QAA guidance.

- **Quality Standards** means the generally accepted standards, methods and working practices applicable to a Programme in the higher education community as defined by the UK Quality Code developed by the United Kingdom Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) and as reflected in LIBF's General and Academic Regulations, Code of Practice and Student Charter.
- **Student** means any person who registers with LIBF for a Programme requiring Collaborative Partner Support Services with the Collaborative Partner.
- **Student Fee** means a fee payable to the Collaborative Partner inclusive of VAT or any other tax or charge per Programme per Student receiving Collaborative Partner Support Services for a Programme listed in the collaborative partner agreement.
- **Term** means part of an Academic Year as determined by The London Institute of Banking & Finance.
- **Validating Body** means any institution within the United Kingdom entitled to award degrees.
- **Validation** means the approval by the Academic Board that the provision of Collaborative Partner Support Services is in accordance with the Quality Standards. Validate, Validated and Validating have a cognate meaning.