SECTION J: THE VALIDATION OF JOINT AWARDS

1 General Considerations

1.1 This section describes the arrangements for the validation, annual evaluation and revalidation of a course of study leading to the conferment of a joint award. A joint award is a single course devised and delivered jointly between two or more institutions and leading to the conferment of a single award in the name of all partners.

1.2 In order to ensure the integrity of such arrangements the University must satisfy itself that appropriate and clear arrangements are in place to ensure the standard and quality of the award, identifying appropriate channels of communication, authority, accountability and executive action.

1.3 All marketing and publicity information pertaining to the award will require the specific prior approval of the relevant School on behalf of the University.

2 Administrative Procedures for Collaborative Validation

2.1 The initiative to consider the validation of a joint award is taken by the School responsible for that subject area. The proposed financial and resource arrangements must be approved by the Dean of the School.

2.2 Following confirmation from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor that the proposal satisfies the University’s indicators necessary for progressing a new collaborative arrangement, the Dean will submit a formal business case of approximately 5 pages to the University’s Standing Committee on Collaborative Provision (SCCP) giving a brief description of the nature of and rationale for the proposal, detailing the general proposals for its costing and resourcing, including the costs of validation and revalidation in addition to any standard annual costs that may apply. The documentation must include an initial financial statement indicating the costs/charges to be borne by each partner signed by the Dean and an appropriate representative from the external institution. The case must be supported by signed statements from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning), the Head of Registry, the Director of Finance and, where appropriate, the Director of Marketing. Where the University has no existing links with an external institution, the case made by the Dean should include explicit references to the institution’s mission, existing provision and strategic aims.

2.3 The Business Case must include evidence of that the proposed partner is legally empowered to grant an award jointly with another institution. The mechanisms for determining responsibility for the central administration and regulatory framework for the course should be included in the Business Case.

2.4 Following approval by SCCP, a Co-operation Agreement shall be drawn up by the Head of Registry or nominee signed by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) and the relevant signatory of the external institution.

2.5 The course will be scrutinised by means of a validation event which will be organised by the School in conjunction with the proposed partner institution. If the delivery of the course is proposed on a multi-campus basis, the process of validation must include a full evaluation of each campus at which it is proposed that the course will be offered. The membership of the validation panel must include:
i) a representative of the University's Teaching and Learning Committee who acts as Chair and who will not be drawn from the proposing School,

ii) two or more academic subject specialists (who also act on behalf of Computing and Library Services),

iii) at least one external member who is a subject specialist. CVs for the proposed external panel member(s) must be approved on behalf of the PVC (T&L) in advance of a formal invitation being extended,

iv) the Head of Registry or nominee.

It is the responsibility of the Dean to ensure that any external member has not had any close involvement with the external institution or the University in the previous five years.

3 The Collaborative Validation Process

3.1 The purpose of the event undertaken by the validation panel will be to establish that the course is of an appropriate standard for the award of the University to which it is intended to lead, that the requisite teaching experience and expertise is available, that the physical resources are appropriate and sufficient for the anticipated number of students, that the support services are able to meet the needs of the course and that the environment in which the course is delivered is appropriate to HE provision.

3.2 The team seeking validation of a course of study must prepare documentation as follows:

i) a programme specification supplemented by the following (compulsory) appendices:
   a) course context (an introduction and rationale for the course)
   b) staffing and management
   c) demonstration of how course learning outcomes map onto modules
   d) demonstration of how course learning outcomes map onto the relevant benchmark statement (where appropriate)
   e) outline assessment schedule

ii) module specification document, which should clearly differentiate by means of colour coding new modules, existing modules which have proposed amendments and existing modules for which no amendments are proposed

iii) a support document offering an overview of the relationship between the institutions involved in the delivery of the course:
   a) rationale for the proposal,
   b) history of the relationship between the institutions (if any),
   c) rationale for the proposed course of study, including anticipated demand,
   d) statement on resources,
   e) curricula vitae of the programme team, indicating research interests and professional development activities relevant to the course,
   f) proposals for delivery of the course,
   g) student support arrangements,
   h) proposals for maintenance of student records,
   i) procedures for the management of the course and details of the quality assurance interface with the University (at the level of both the School Teaching and Learning Committee and the University's Teaching and Learning Committee) including external examining arrangements, annual evaluation and revalidation,
   j) other relevant information.
3.3 The validation panel will discuss the submission with representatives of the institutions, including key members of the senior management team and the proposed teaching team. The panel will require to be shown the physical and learning resources that will be made available to the course.

3.4 The Head of Registry or nominee will prepare both a report on the event and, if validation is recommended, a Contract of Collaboration detailing the academic and administrative arrangements for the course. The report will be submitted to the University’s Teaching and Learning Committee and SCCP for approval.

3.5 Following validation of the course, the Contract of Collaboration will be signed by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) and the relevant signatory from the partner institution. The Contract of Collaboration will be valid for the period of validation only and will be re-issued at each re-validation point.

3.6 The financial arrangements will be the subject of a formal financial schedule, an annual agreement between the School and the partner institution, and a copy will be lodged with the Registry as an appendix to the Contract of Collaboration. The financial schedule must be approved by the Director of Finance (or nominee) before being issued.

4 Financial Arrangements

4.1 The financial arrangements are negotiated between the School and the partner institution and must cover both the School’s costs and the University’s central costs, although the School must consult with the Director of Finance to ensure that the proposed arrangements are acceptable to the University.

5 Annual Evaluation

5.1 Timetable for Annual Evaluation

Evaluation reports on courses of study validated by the University will be sent to the Dean of the School responsible for that course (or nominee) at the start of the following academic session for inclusion in the Annual Evaluation process. The Dean of the School (or nominee) will ensure that a copy of the report is submitted to the Head of Registry (or nominee).

5.2 Contents of Annual Evaluation Reports

A report including information as specified in Section L.2 of the University’s Handbook of Quality Assurance Procedures for Taught Courses and Research Awards should be produced for each course.

6 Collaborative Revalidation

6.1 The Function of Collaborative Revalidation

Revalidation is the mechanism through which the Senate reviews and assesses the quality of its academic provision. The University’s Teaching and Learning Committee is responsible for ensuring that each collaborative arrangement is subject to revalidation at least once every five years.
6.2 Collaborative Revalidation Process

The revalidation will be undertaken by means of an event organised by the School. The membership of the panel must include:

i) a representative of the University’s Teaching and Learning Committee who acts as Chair and who will not be drawn from the proposing School,
ii) two or more academic subject specialists (who also acts on behalf of Computing and Library Services),
iii) an external member who is a subject specialist. CVs for the proposed external panel member(s) must be approved on behalf of the PVC (T&L) in advance of a formal invitation being extended,
iv) the Head of Registry or nominee.

6.3 Issues Considered at Collaborative Revalidation

Revalidation of a course of study jointly designed and delivered with an external institution will concentrate on the following:

i) the success of the relationship between the partners;
ii) the appropriateness and achievement of the general and specific aims and the objectives of the course;
iii) the structure of the course, its progression, balance and coherence;
iv) strategies for teaching and for assessment;
v) evidence of sustainable demand for the course
vi) resources available for the course, both human and physical (including curricula vitae of the programme team, indicating research interests and professional development activities relevant to the course);
vii) staff development;
viii) procedures for management of the course and for quality assurance, including involvement of external examiners and evidence of effective student representation arrangements;
ix) a review of the financial aspects of the provision.

6.4 Documentation required for Collaborative Revalidation

The documentation submitted to the panel should focus on issues listed in paragraph 6.3 above and should incorporate critical appraisal where appropriate. The programme specification and module specification documents should also be reproduced with proposed changes or additions highlighted.

6.5 Conduct of the Collaborative Revalidation event

The programme for revalidation is determined in consultation between members of the panel after receipt of documentation. The programme should normally include two or more meetings with the teaching team, including representatives from the senior management and a meeting with students.

6.6 Report of Panels

The Head of Registry or nominee will prepare a report on the event for the approval of the University’s Teaching and Learning Committee and the SCCP.
7. Termination of Agreement

Decisions to terminate agreements may be initiated either by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning), as a result of strategic decisions about the future of the collaborative provision or as a result of concerns expressed about its operation, or by the Dean of the School identified as having responsibility for the course in the Memorandum of Co-operation in consultation with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning).

A decision to terminate must be approved by either the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) or by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor in consultation with SCCP.

Arrangements for the support of students who have yet to complete an award will be submitted to the SCCP for approval.