

## **Due Diligence and approval procedure for a new Collaborative Academic Partner (Including apprenticeship Sub-contractors)**

### **Introduction**

This procedure should be undertaken for any potential new Collaborative Academic Partner i.e. for any organisation who will be involved in delivering an award(s) or modules awarded by Staffordshire University. This procedure does include organisations involved in the delivery of Apprenticeships.

#### **1. Initial Investigations & School Approval**

- 1.1 This stage involves informal discussions with the potential partner and colleagues from the School and the Collaborative Academic Partnerships (CAP) team, to explore the type of arrangement proposed. Colleagues from Employer Partnerships and/or International Development may be involved in these discussions. CAP can advise on the type of arrangement most suitable i.e. franchise, validation, flying faculty etc.
- 1.2 The School should undertake a very basis due diligence to discover information about the potential partner.
- 1.3 If the proposal is to be progressed, the School will undertake the ethical investigations to consider if the potential partner is:-
  - a) Ethically well regarded
  - b) Ethically neutral
  - c) Ethically controversial.
- 1.4 If 'a' or 'b' above the proposal should progress to the next stage of gathering information to provide to the School Dean(s).
- 1.5 If 'c', the initial proposal should be presented to the Senior Leadership Team for permission to progress with the potential partnership.
- 1.6 The CAP team will support the School in collating information, undertaking an initial risk assessment (IRA Form) and requesting that the potential partner completes an 'Initial Information Collaborative Academic Partnerships' form (IICAP). Using the evidence gained from these documents, the proposer and colleagues from CAP will prepare the formal proposal documentation (CAPP) to submit to the School Dean(s) for approval to proceed.
- 1.7 The School will work with Financial Services to produce an income and expenditure projection to inform the proposal.
- 1.8 The proposal is then submitted to the School Dean(s) for approval to procedure to the next stage of the investigations.
- 1.9 If the proposal is not to be progressed, the CAP team will inform the potential partner and note the reason for University records.
- 1.10 Following the Deans approval, the School (supported by CAP) will submit the proposal including the income projections to the Senior Leadership Team for consideration and approval to proceed to the formal due diligence.
- 1.11 If the proposal is not to be progressed, the CAP team will inform the potential partner and note the reason for University records.

## **2. Legal & Financial Due Diligence**

- 2.1 The CAP team liaises with the potential partner to collect evidence to establish the legal status of the organisation and their capacity to enter into a collaborative agreement with the University.
- 2.2 The CAP team liaises with the potential partner to collect financial documents to enable colleagues in the University Financial Services to undertake a review of the financial status of the organisation.
- 2.3 The Director of CAP produces a report with recommendations on whether or not to proceed, based on evidence collected and submits to the Due Diligence Group for a decision if the proposal is to be progressed.
- 2.4 If the proposal is to be further investigated the partnership operations, quality assurance and development and delivery of the courses will be progressed.
- 2.5 The Due Diligence group will agree with the Chair of the Partnership Committee if the partnership is not to be progressed at this stage and then the potential partner will be informed by the CAP team and the reasons noted for University records.

## **3. Partnership & Course Approval**

- 3.1 The standard course approval process will commence at the same time as the legal and financial due diligence. This will require the School to lead this through the course planning and approval process, supported by the CAP Manager for the new partnership.
- 3.2 A Partnership Approval event will be undertaken. See Partnership Approval Event process.
- 3.3 For Franchise provision, the 'delivery' approval for the partner will be completed as part of the overall Partnership Approval Event. For validated or new courses the 'delivery' approval may be done as part of the course approval when the courses are submitted to the Validation Standing Panel.
- 3.4 The Partnership Approval Event report with any conditions and recommendations are submitted to the Quality & Enhancement Committee who will make recommendations, to be included in the final Due Diligence & Outcomes report which will be considered by the Partnership Committee for a final decision on the approval of the potential partnership.
- 3.5 The Quality & Enhancement Committee will also make recommendations regarding the 'delivery' approval by the partner to be included in the final Due Diligence & Outcomes report.
- 3.6 The Quality & Enhancement Committee will have the final decision on whether or not to approve any new courses which have come through the course approval process. The decision on the approval/validation of courses does not progress to the Partnership Committee.

## **4. Final Approval**

- 4.1 Based on the outcomes of the above process, the Director of CAP will produce the final Due Diligence & Outcomes report with recommendations which will be submitted to the Partnership Committee for a decision on whether or not to proceed with the partnership.
- 4.2 If the Partnership Committee agree to proceed with the arrangement, the Director of CAP will arrange signature of the Collaborative Academic Partnership Agreement by the University and the partner. Where the arrangement is for Apprenticeship delivery, an Apprenticeship sub-contractor agreement will also be required. This will be managed by the Employer Partnerships team.

4.3 Once the Collaborative Academic Partnership Agreement has been signed, the Quality Enhancement team will arrange for the University Collaborative Provision Register to be updated.

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