**Policy Coversheet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Policy:</th>
<th>Academic Link Tutors: appointment and responsibilities</th>
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<tr>
<td>Purpose of Policy:</td>
<td>To outline the arrangements for the appointment of University Academic Link Tutors for collaborative academic provision and define their responsibilities.</td>
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<td>Intended audience(s):</td>
<td>Staff/External Parties</td>
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<td>Approval for this policy given by:</td>
<td>Quality Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Last Review Date:</td>
<td>10/10/2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review Due Date: (3 years from last review)</td>
<td>10/10/2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual responsible for review:</td>
<td>Director of Quality Enhancement and Standards Director of Collaborative Academic Partnerships</td>
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<td>Authorising department:</td>
<td>Academic Development Unit</td>
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<td>Collaborative Academic Partnerships</td>
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ACADEMIC LINK TUTORS

1. Introduction
1.1 Staffordshire University is committed to maintaining and developing educational partnerships with universities, colleges and other organizations in the UK and internationally.
1.2 Staffordshire University has a range of collaborative activity with academic partner organizations, including franchise, validated, outreach and dual award models. All activity comes within the scope of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B10: Managing Higher Education Provision with Others.
1.3 Staffordshire University is responsible for the standards of any award issued in its name.
1.4 All franchised and validated courses delivered in collaboration with a partner institution and dual awards will be supported by a Staffordshire University Academic Link Tutor, to support the academic quality and standards of the course/s delivered at the partner institution. These awards may be included within an Apprenticeship framework.

2. Appointment of Academic Link Tutors
2.1 School Academic Committees are responsible for confirming the appointment of Academic Link Tutors.
2.2 Schools should consult with the appropriate Collaborative Academic Partnership Manager prior to the appointment of an Academic Link Tutor, and inform them once the appointment is agreed.
2.3 The tenure period for Academic Link Tutors will normally be four years, after which the tenure may be renewed, if required. Re-appointment will be confirmed annually and be subject to confirmation of satisfactory performance in the role by their Line Manager.
2.4 At the start of each academic year Schools must confirm details of all Academic Link Tutor appointments with the Collaborative Academic Partnership Service (CAPS) who maintain the register of Academic Link Tutors and will share this with the Quality Enhancement Service (QES).
2.5 Any subsequent changes to the allocation of Academic Link Tutors must be notified by Schools to CAPS during the year.
2.6 Details of Academic Link Tutor appointments will be given to partner institutions by the relevant Collaborative Academic Partnership Manager.
2.7 New Academic Link Tutors will be required to attend a mandatory induction meeting with the Collaborative Academic Partnership Manager (CAPM) and relevant training for the role which will be available throughout the year. Similarly continuing Academic Link Tutors will be required to attend training annually.
2.8 Appraisal of how a member of staff has fulfilled their Academic Link Tutor role/s will be incorporated within the annual Performance and Development Review (PDR).
3. Academic Link Tutor Responsibilities

3.1 Roles and Responsibilities of the Academic Link Tutor

1. Essential Responsibilities of all Academic Link Tutors

Through its risk assessment, approval and monitoring procedures, the University is able to build trust in its partners and place reliance on their quality systems. Quality and standards are assured through the work of a number of staff operating in different roles i.e. Collaborative Academic Partnerships Managers, ALTs, external subject specialists, external examiners, partner staff and University professional services staff.

The over-riding responsibility of the ALT is to support the academic delivery of collaborative provision delivered through partners to ensure that standards and quality are maintained and that the course team at partners are working in accordance with University policy and procedures relating to the delivery of our courses.

The role of the ALT falls into three broad areas: -

A. Supporting the University oversight of Academic Standards
B. Overseeing the Quality of the Learning Opportunities
C. Helping to ensure the Application of the University’s Quality Management Framework

A. Overseeing Academic Standards

A1. Course Standards

This involves helping to ensure that the course and its delivery have not diverged significantly from the academic standards set and confirmed at approval, and includes: -

- Advising the partner course team on course approvals/validation, meeting any course specific conditions of validation, structure and content of programme specification and other course documents.
- For Dual Awards, ensuring curriculum is current and leading on changes where required.
- Checking that adequate specialist resources are in place for delivery of the course.
- Advising the course team on the procedures to be followed for the approval of modifications to the approved course and ensuring that these are followed up as necessary within the School.
- Maintaining the Continuous Monitoring Plan for the course(s)

A2. Assessment Standards

This involves helping to ensure that the academic standards actually achieved by students are consistent with what was planned at approval, comparable with university provision and acceptable in the light of all relevant external benchmarks. The ALT will ensure that the partner organisation follows the University’s latest principles regarding Assessment as set out within the University’s policy and procedures. This will include participating in and maintaining oversight of the following for their subject areas:-

- Internal verification of assessments
- Internal moderation (3rd marking)
- Ensuring correct examination processes are followed
A3. External Examining
This involves contributing to the effective operation of external examining arrangements to assure the maintenance of appropriate academic standards. It includes:

- Assisting and advising, as appropriate, on the appointment of external examiners(s) for collaborative provision leading to University Awards.
- Reviewing and analysing external examiner reports and ensuring that the partner course team/partner organisation responds effectively to the issues raised therein by leading the academic conversations and liaising with both the partner and external examiner as appropriate.

B. Overseeing the Quality of the Learning Opportunities

B1. Course Quality
This involves helping to ensure that the course quality and quality of the student experience continue to be appropriate to the course aims. It includes:

- Maintaining the Continuous Monitoring Plan for the course(s)
- Meeting students to review their experience of the course
- Liaising with the partner course leader and the Collaborative Academic Partnerships Manager to ensure that both organisations are aware of issues arising from complaints and appeals and to resolve issues where necessary.

B2. Quality of Teaching: Staffing
This involves monitoring the operation of collaborative provision to ensure that staff engaged in the delivery of provision are appropriately qualified and trained and consulting with the partner to help ensure that the quality of staffing for the course is maintained. It includes:

- Considering with the partner course leader the impact of staff leaving the teaching team and discussing with the Collaborative Academic Partnerships Manager.
- Ensuring new staff joining the teaching team at the partner are approved through the School Academic Committee prior to teaching on Staffordshire University courses.
- Considering with the partner course leader any academic staff development needs arising and ensuring that they are addressed, including taking advantage of appropriate opportunities within the University.

B3. Quality of Learning Infrastructure
This involves ensuring that the learning infrastructure remains appropriate. It includes:

- Checking and approving the accuracy of course information for students, for example programme specifications, student handbooks and module handbooks and regulatory information.
- Checking that agreed arrangements for course learning resources (library, laboratory, performance space and IT facilities as appropriate) are in place, engaging input from University Learning and Information Services where appropriate.
C. Helping to ensure application of the University’s Quality Management and Enhancement policies and procedures.

C1. Course Level Management
This involves checking that there is effective implementation of course level quality processes and involves: -

- Attending course committee meetings or equivalent as appropriate or reviewing meeting documents to ensure its effective operation, including review and remedy of difficulties.
- Checking that course level student representation and feedback systems are effective
- Developing an annual ALT Planner with the partner to agree the type and level of course specific support for the forthcoming academic year.

C2. Publicity and Marketing
The ALT seeks to ensure that the collaborative provision course(s) are accurately represented and does not mislead students. This will involve checking and approving, on behalf of the University, any course related promotional materials, bearing the University’s name, prior to publication. This checking will be done in liaison with the Collaborative Academic Partnerships Service who is responsible for oversight of more generic University publicity.

C3. Input to School and University Quality Management Framework Processes
This involves contributing as appropriate to the processes through which the University assures itself of the continued health of its collaborative provision courses, and the quality of the overall partnership. This includes: -

- Preparing and contributing to any annual or continuous monitoring reports from a course perspective e.g. Annual Monitoring Reports.
- Attending meetings as required to discuss monitoring and review.
- Informing the Director of Collaborative Academic Partnerships, the Collaborative Academic Partnerships Manager and the relevant Head of Department of any matter which may affect the nature of the University relationship, in particular early intelligence of any proposed review or inspection of collaborative provision by any external body.

The above activities will also be undertaken for the awards delivered as part of an apprenticeship.

Visits

- To provide advance details of all visits to the Collaborative Academic Partnerships Service and note on the University travel calendar.
- To meet with the partner institution:
  - one visit in person per year, supported by an additional meeting by Skype/video conference. The meetings (in person or virtual) may include attendance at a Course Committee;
  - Academic Link Tutors should also normally attend Award Boards (in person or virtually) for all institutions for which they are responsible;
Additional visits may be required as determined through ongoing risk management assessment through the Collaborative Academic Partnerships Service eg. where serious quality issues have been identified or where a partner is developing new provision or has multiple sites. Visits may be face-to-face or by Skype/video conference as necessary. Quality Committee will note where additional visits have been required and the outcomes of any actions.

If the Academic Link Tutor is unable to undertake a visit, the School, in collaboration with the Collaborative Academic Partnerships Manager, should arrange for someone with suitable knowledge of the partner and/or area of provision to go in his/her place.

Academic Link Tutors should work with colleagues in the School and wider University to ensure that the scheduling of any visits is appropriate to the ongoing support of both the course/s for which they are responsible and the wider interests of the University and the collaborative academic partnership.

- To meet with relevant course staff and key support staff at the partner institution to consider the delivery and management of the approved collaborative course/s, to identify areas of good practice or concern, and determine ways in which to deal with any issues.

Revised September 2018