



University of  
St Andrews

## Collaborative provision of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes

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<b>Purpose</b>	This policy sets out the framework within which collaborative provision is developed and managed at St Andrews. This includes the principles of collaborative provision, the University's responsibilities and types of collaborative provision.

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1.1	Changes to Associate Provost title	Updated	Emily Feamster	August 2021

**UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS  
COLLABORATIVE PROVISION OF UNDERGRADUATE  
AND POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES**

## **1. Introduction**

The University is committed to the development and enhancement of strategic alliances that enrich the academic life of the institution and further cultivate the University's 'internationally Scottish' dimension. Strategic partnerships are driven by strong synergies in teaching and research expertise, and operate successfully on multiple levels, reflecting academic priorities in research and curriculum development and providing the foundation for strong, multi-faceted and long-term collaborations.

This document sets out the framework within which collaborative provision is developed and managed at St Andrews.

Further information about managing collaborative provision can be found in the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education – Advice and Guidance: Partnerships](#).

## **2. Principles**

- Collaborative projects are underpinned by a strategic partnership and a genuinely joint enterprise.
- Collaborative projects offer students innovative and enhanced learning experiences.
- Collaborative arrangements must be negotiated, approved and managed in accordance with University policy and associated procedures.
- Proposals for new collaborations will be considered within the context of University strategy, existing links and commitments.
- In establishing and operating institutional collaborations, the University is committed to the principles of good practice defined by the UK Quality Code.

## **3. University responsibilities**

The University is responsible for:

- Ensuring a strategic approach and the commitment of appropriate resources to support collaborative provision;
- Assuring the quality and standards of all provision leading to a St Andrews award, irrespective of where these opportunities are delivered and who provides them. This responsibility is never delegated;
- Ensuring that the experience offered to students at the partner complements the high quality experience at St Andrews;
- Undertaking appropriate risk assessment and due diligence procedures at the outset and throughout the collaborative project;
- Maintaining policies and procedures which mitigate against the risks of collaboration and facilitate the successful management of the provision;
- Establishing and reviewing an institutional agreement to govern the collaborative arrangement;
- Ensuring that there are appropriate contingency plans for students to complete a programme in the event of an agreement termination;
- Maintaining a register of active partnerships;

- Fulfilling the requirements of any professional, statutory and regulatory body that has approved or recognised the programme or award;
- Ensuring that admissions to collaborative programmes are consistent with St Andrews policies;
- Agreeing with partners the division of assessment responsibilities and the assessment regulations which apply;
- Appointing and briefing of External Examiners;
- Ensuring effective control over the accuracy of all public information, publicity and promotional activity relating to collaborative provision;
- Awarding certificates and issuing detailed records of study in relation to student achievement.

#### **4. Types of Collaborative Provision**

##### **Collaborative Degrees**

Each collaborative programme is unique and reflects the specific arrangements agreed between St Andrews and the partner(s) involved. The following definitions, based on information provided by the QAA, are a guide to the spectrum of arrangements which may be developed.

Most of the current collaborative degrees at St Andrews are Joint Degrees, which is the University's preferred model, ensuring a fully integrated collaborative programme which offers students a unique learning experience and a single award which reflects the joint nature of the programme.

##### Joint Degree

An arrangement in which St Andrews and one or more partners are involved in all aspects of programme design, development, delivery, assessment, management and decision-making on student achievement. In order to successfully complete the Joint Degree programme, students must fulfil the joint programme requirements. Upon successful completion, students gain a single certificate bearing the signatures and crests of all degree-awarding bodies involved.

##### Double Degree

Where a programme is jointly designed and delivered as described above, but it is not possible to award a joint certificate, usually due to legal or regulatory requirements on the partner institution(s). In such cases, students are awarded two (or more) certificates, one from each degree-awarding body involved. The certificate and/or transcript of St Andrews refers to the existence of the other(s) and makes clear that they refer to the completion of a single, jointly conceived, programme. The awards are fundamentally linked and students must therefore fulfil the joint programme requirements.

##### Co-tutelle

A collaborative PhD arrangement which is specifically for a named individual student. Most often, students receive a single Joint certificate, though in cases where legal requirements prevent this award, students may receive two certificates, each of which refers to the joint nature of the programme.

##### Dual Degree

This involves institutions working together to offer a jointly conceived programme, but unlike Joint and Double awards, there is not a single set of joint programme requirements which students must complete. Rather, the programmes are designed to enable students to achieve more than one distinct set of criteria, although these may overlap.

This model often involves two institutions jointly designing a programme of study comprising two separate blocks taken consecutively at each partner in turn, leading to two separate

qualifications awarded individually by the institutions. Each institution is responsible for its own award but the two components form a single package, and the overall arrangement is a joint enterprise that requires a shared understanding of credits and pathways, and elements of joint management and oversight. A distinguishing feature of this type of arrangement is that the overall study period and volume of learning is often longer than for either of the individual awards separately, but usually shorter than if each of the programmes of study had been taken consecutively.

These arrangements have aspects in common with articulation agreements, in that the two learning experiences are aligned and one partner recognises learning undertaken at the other as contributing to its own qualification. However, they are distinguished by the way in which they are conceived as a joint enterprise involving more than one degree-awarding body, and where the award made by each is dependent on the other.

## **5. Validation**

The award of an academic qualification by St Andrews, which is delivered by one or more other institutions. In such arrangements, students are matriculated at St Andrews and have access to appropriate University facilities. The University takes responsibility for the quality and standard of the programmes validated as leading towards a St Andrews award. Quality assurance arrangements and academic standards are as equally rigorous as those applied to University programmes.

## **6. Articulation**

An agreement with other Higher Education institutions, Further Education institutions, or appropriate non-educational bodies associated with professions, business or industry to establish effective progression into or out of a programme of study offered by St Andrews. Credit achieved at one provider is transferred to contribute to the award completed at another, but the programme is not a joint enterprise, and each organisation retains responsibility for its respective component.

## **7. Exchange and Study Abroad**

An arrangement whereby St Andrews students spend time, usually a semester or full academic year, at an approved partner institution as an integral part of their St Andrews degree programme. Approved credits and grades are converted upon return to St Andrews and are used in degree classification as appropriate.

## **8. Work Placement**

Work Placements are credit-bearing placements which are undertaken as an integral part of a St Andrews degree programme and which are hosted by a third party outside the University learning environment in an industrial, business, healthcare or other professional working structure.

Work Placements may extend over an entire academic year, or a shorter period within the academic year or summer vacation. Work Placements may be compulsory or optional, paid or unpaid, in the UK or abroad.

## **9. Establishing Collaborative Provision**

### Business Case and Proposal

The nature of the proposal depends on the type of collaborative provision proposed. Collaborative Degrees (with the exception of Co-tutelles), Articulation and Validation arrangements all require completion of a Collaborative Business Case and supporting

documentation, which includes a Letter of Support from the partner institution, a Financial Plan, and a Risk Assessment.

In addition, a Programme Proposal and, if relevant, Module Proposals are required to provide comprehensive details of the curriculum arrangements for any Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught programme.

All collaborative provision proposals require an appropriate risk assessment and due diligence checks.

### Approval

The approval route varies as appropriate to the nature of the proposal. Details are provided in proposal and approval flowcharts available at: <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/staff/studentadmin/study-abroad/typesofcollaborativeprovision/>

Collaborative Taught Degree	Business case, followed by Programme and Module Proposals	Principal's Office, CAG
Collaborative PhD (Global PhD)	Global PhD Proposal form	Associate Provost Education
Validation	Business case, followed by Programme Details	Principal's Office, CAG
Articulation	Business case, followed by Programme Details	Principal's Office (via the Admissions Committee), CAG
Exchange and Study Abroad	Exchange Proposal form	CAG
Work Placement	Work Placement Agreement	School and Global, CAG if programmatic

In cases where a Collaborative Business Case is required, the CBC and any supporting documentation, such as a Letter of Support from the partner institution and the Financial Plan, are reviewed and approved by the Principal's Office.

Once approved in principle, detailed programme proposals are considered by CAG and approved by the Assistant Vice-Principal (Dean of Learning & Teaching).

Institutional agreements are then negotiated, and signed by the Vice-Principal (International).

In approving new collaborative provision, the following factors are considered:

- Alignment with University strategy
- The strength and desirability of the partnership
- Financial viability and sustainability
- Quality of the learning experience and associated student support
- Market demand
- Legal and statutory framework, especially if the partner is overseas
- Safety and security if the partner is overseas

## **10. Agreements**

An institutional agreement must be approved and signed at the outset of a collaborative project, and before any students commence the programme.

Once signed by all parties, agreements which involve collaborative provision are stored by the Global Office, which is responsible for maintaining the institutional partnership record.

Agreements will usually be approved for a fixed period of three to five years initially, and it is expected that a thorough review of the agreement and the collaborative programme will take place before any agreement is renewed.

There are two main types of agreement:

#### Memorandum of Understanding

An MoU is a broad commitment to work with another institution. It is a statement of intent, rather than a substantive agreement, though it is often an important first step towards a collaborative project. An MoU may be signed with the approval of the relevant Head of School and Assistant Vice-Principal (Dean of Learning & Teaching).

#### Memorandum of Agreement

An MoA is a more comprehensive institutional agreement which details the specific arrangements governing a particular collaborative project. It includes arrangements for admissions, curriculum, assessment and award, as appropriate, as well as any legal or regulatory requirements. An MoA will only be signed by the Principal's Office upon successful conclusion of the relevant approval process.

### **11. Monitoring Collaborative Provision**

The University is responsible for the academic standards of awards irrespective of whether delivered entirely in St Andrews or in collaboration with another institution. The quality assurance arrangements for collaborative degrees should be at least as rigorous as those for internal provision and should be in accordance with all other University quality assurance policies and guidelines. In principle, all collaborative programmes should be reviewed annually and periodically. The Academic Monitoring Group (Partnerships and Collaborations) will oversee academic standards and quality assurance processes for all collaborative provision, and will meet once per semester.

The University has a Five-stage Review Process, which covers: Approval, Implementation, First Review; Annual Review and Monitoring; Final Review.

#### Scope and proportionality

Review should be flexible and proportionate to the scale and type of collaboration. In principle, the review process below applies to the following types of collaborations:

- Collaborative degrees (UG, PGT, PGR)
- Validation
- Articulation

However, the review would be flexible and proportionate to the type of collaboration. It is not envisaged that all review stages be applied to all of the above.

Arrangements for Exchange, Study Abroad and Work Placement reviews are managed separately through the Outbound Mobility annual review process.

## Self-evaluation

As in regular review processes, this should form a key component of reviewing collaborations. This should reflect on, for example: continued alignment to strategic objectives, relationship with partner, agreement issues, analysis of student feedback and performance, details of any issues with credit and grade transfer, developments since establishment/ last review, details of any site visits, examples of good practice that may be applied to other collaborative programmes.

## Partner institutions

Partner institutions should be involved in all stages of the review process, as appropriate for the particular type and level of collaboration.

A summary of any review and outcomes should be sent to the partner institution as a matter of routine.

## External Examiners

The External Examiner system is not common outwith the UK, which may make this aspect of international partnerships a little more challenging. The system should be clarified to the partner at the outset.

The University retains responsibility for the appointment and functions of External Examiners for all collaborative programmes.

Where possible, each institution would share the reports received from each respective External Examiner as well as the institution's response to the report and a summary of any actions taken.

## Five-stage review process

### 1. Approval

The approval process ensures thorough review of collaborative proposals and due diligence at the outset. This covers, for example, existing links with the partner, status of partner, arrangements for partnership operation including lead institution (rules and regulations), partner's procedures for module approval and review, partner's strategies for enhancement.

### 2. Implementation

This stage involves a light-touch and relatively informal review at the commencement of the programme. It primarily involves the School, Global Office and Registry, and is intended to iron out any issues with the initial programme establishment. A summary report of Implementation reviews is collated annually by the Global Office for consideration by the Academic Monitoring Group (AMG).

### 3. First review

The first review provides an early opportunity to monitor progress, and ensure any problems are identified and resolved at an early stage in the life cycle of the programme. This comprehensive

initial review normally takes place in the academic year after the first cohort of students has been admitted (irrespective of location of study in the first year). There is an emphasis on self-evaluation, but the review should include external examiner feedback and student feedback as well. First review reports are submitted to AMG for consideration.

#### 4. Annual monitoring and review

Each School will be prompted to include information about collaborative programmes in the annual academic monitoring process. The Head of Education Policy and Quality will identify any issues of concern and ensure that this is discussed with the School during the monitoring process.

Where appropriate, collaborative programmes will also form part of the Internal Review of Learning and Teaching. This should include monitoring of student progression; completion data; External Examiners' reports; PSRB reports; staff and student feedback.

#### 5. Agreement renewal review

This stage is a full review of all aspects of the Partnership (including financial, strategic direction etc) and should take place around 12 months prior to the end of the agreement period. This would provide an opportunity for University review of the operation, management and development of the partnership.

Again, there is a strong emphasis on self-evaluation, but the review should also include feedback from students and external examiners. Review reports are submitted to AMG for consideration. Thereafter, an institutional decision is made as to whether to renew, amend or terminate the collaborative agreement.

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1.0	Updated titles/contact details to reflect decanal restructuring	Updated	-	February 2021
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