

## ACADEMIC APPROVAL OF TAUGHT AWARD OR CREDIT-BEARING PROVISION DELIVERED IN PARTNERSHIP

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## Outline of the procedure

1. This stage in the approval process has been designed to meet the expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and to meet the common and core practices for standards and quality. It takes account of a number of guiding principles set out within the accompanying Advice and Guidance sections.
2. Having approved the separate reports from the Vice Principal (International) (or nominee) and Finance, the Collaborative Provision Committee will authorise the proposal to proceed to the academic scrutiny stage.
3. The academic approval process for taught provision delivered in partnership and global online support centres follows an identical process for taught provision delivered at an Edinburgh campus, that is, internal school-level scrutiny followed by scrutiny by internal and external academic peers at a formal approval event. See [Quality Framework Section 1c: Academic approval of taught award or credit-bearing provision](#) for detailed information on internal school-level scrutiny.

## Underpinning principles

4. Academic approval is undertaken on behalf of the University by a panel consisting of independent internal and external academic peers with no direct connection to the proposing school.
5. Academic approval is undertaken to judge whether the proposed partner has the ability to support the delivery of the proposed provision and support students' learning.
6. Academic approval events involving a new partner organisation will take place at the partner organisation. In the case of global online support centres, normally the event will take place on campus in Edinburgh.
7. The location of subsequent programme approval events involving an existing partner will be agreed by the Collaborative Provision Committee on a case by case basis taking account of the following criteria:
  - a) monitoring by the Vice Principal (International) and Finance has not identified any potential reputational risk to the University
  - b) the proposed additional provision is in a subject area already being delivered in partnership with the existing partner
  - c) existing approved provision in the proposed subject area must have been scrutinised through the first year review process



- d) any action required of the partner as a result of University monitoring and review activities has been satisfactorily resolved
  - e) the proposed provision will be delivered on the same premises as existing approved provision and by the existing partner
  - f) the partner has appropriate and proven as effective video conferencing facilities to enable an event to be conducted through this medium if agreed by the Collaborative Provision Committee
  - g) the partner agrees in writing to the approval event not taking place at the place of delivery.
8. The location of the approval event will be discussed and agreed as part of the CPC1 approval process.
  9. Approved modules within a proposed programme structure will not be subject to scrutiny and re-approval but module descriptors will be made available electronically to the approval panel considering a proposal.
  10. Academic approval enables external and internal peers to meet with a programme team to evaluate critically and reflect upon a proposal to offer students in another location, a viable and secure learning experience, equitable to that provided to Edinburgh-based students.
  11. All proposals to approve a taught programme must be subjected to school-level scrutiny before being submitted for scrutiny and consideration by an approvals panel.
  12. The time taken to prepare for and complete the academic approval of a collaborative programme is controlled by the proposing school and dependent on the nominated coordinator ensuring that the Collaborative Provision Committee is kept fully informed of progress in developing a proposal in accordance with this process.
  13. The Convenor of the Collaborative Provision Committee reserves the right to cancel an approval event should inadequate or incomplete documentation be available three weeks before the agreed date for the event.
  14. CPC4 provides a planning template of key dates and activities associated with the academic approval process.



## Responsibilities

### Nominated coordinator responsibilities

15. Nominated coordinators are responsible for:

- a) leading and coordinating the development of a proposed taught award or credit-bearing programme and for ensuring that the proposal is supported by subject colleagues and the Dean of School
- b) ensuring that Collaborative Provision Committee is kept fully informed of any subject specific matters which have the potential to affect the formal academic approval process
- c) ensuring all administrative arrangements relating to travel and accommodation are completed and for arranging for all financial costs associated with the academic approval event to be met by the School
- d) liaising with the module leaders of all modules within the proposed programme structure to ensure that they are aware of and support the proposal
- e) liaising with colleagues to design and develop new taught modules where appropriate
- f) liaising with Information Services colleagues regarding the provision of learning resources
- g) liaising with appropriate School Support Service staff to arrange a school scrutiny event and to confirm the target date for the proposal to be considered by the Collaborative Provision Committee's approval panel
- h) preparing the proposal for the school-level scrutiny
- i) ensuring that any matters identified during the school-level scrutiny are addressed before the proposal is considered by the Collaborative Provision Committee's approval panel
- j) liaising with the module leaders of all modules within the proposed programme structure to ensure that they are aware of and support the outcome of the school-level scrutiny
- k) ensuring that the approved information set to support a programme proposal is signed-off and released by the School Academic Lead for Quality as being of an appropriate standard and quality for consideration by the Collaborative Provision Committee's approval panel



- l) liaising with appropriate School Support Service staff to provide the approved minimum information set to support the proposal within the agreed school timescale
- m) where appropriate, providing appropriate School Support Service staff with amended paperwork to take full account of any changes required by the Collaborative Provision Committee's approval panel.

### **Clerk to Collaborative Provision Committee responsibilities**

16. The Clerk to Collaborative Provision Committee is responsible for:

- a) appointing the approval panel and briefing them on their role
- b) circulating the approved minimum information set to support the academic proposal to panel members a minimum of 14 working days before the agreed date for the approval event
- c) receiving from panel members a list of points they wish to explore with the programme team(s) during the event a minimum of seven working days before the agreed date for the approval event. This list will be developed using approval checklist CPC3
- d) where practical, sending the nominated coordinator a summary of panel members' comments on the proposal before the day of the meeting
- e) providing a report to the Collaborative Provision Committee and the appropriate School Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee on the points discussed during the approval event, the outcome reached, areas of good or innovative practice, strengths and achievements noted by panel members (and a brief reflection by panel members on the conduct of the approval event)
- f) reviewing the amended paperwork sent by the nominated coordinator to ensure that approval panel requirements have been met
- g) forwarding the amended paperwork to the approval panel convener for final approval
- h) for overseas partnerships, liaising with the International Programmes Manager regarding the preparation of the final collaboration agreement and [CPC5](#) for signature by the Director of Finance, Dean of School and the Convenor of Collaborative Provision Committee
- i) for global online support centres, liaising with the Global Online Enhancement Lead regarding the preparation of the final global online



support centre collaborative agreement and CPC5 for signature by the Director of Finance, Dean of School and the Convenor of Collaborative Provision Committee

- j) for UK-based partnerships, liaising with appropriate School Support Service staff regarding the preparation of the final collaboration agreement and CPC5 for signature by the Director of Finance, Dean of School and the Convenor of Collaborative Provision Committee
- k) maintaining and retaining accurate and complete records to demonstrate that all taught provision is designed, developed, approved and amended in accordance with this procedure.

## **The school-level scrutiny**

17. The purpose of the school-level scrutiny is to assist the programme team in providing the Collaborative Provision Committee's approval panel with sufficient information to enable the panel to judge and approve the proposal while avoiding the need for conditions being applied. See [Quality Framework Section 1c: Academic approval of taught award or credit-bearing provision](#) for detailed information on the school scrutiny.
18. The outcome of the scrutiny event helps to reassure the programme team and the School Academic Lead for Quality that the proposed taught provision meets University quality and standards expectations.
19. To enable a proposal to be finalised after the scrutiny and to give approvals panel members sufficient time to prepare for the meeting of the panel it is recommended that the scrutiny takes place a minimum of 28 working days before the date of the Collaborative Provision Committee's approval panel.

## **The Collaborative Provision Committee's academic approval panel**

### **Selecting the Collaborative Provision Committee's academic approval panel**

20. The Clerk to the Collaborative Provision Committee in liaison with the nominated coordinator will appoint, on behalf of Collaborative Provision Committee, an approval panel to consider each proposal and arrange for them to be briefed on their role. A standard Collaborative Provision Committee approval panel will consist of:
  - a) a convenor (typically a member of an Academic Board sub-committee but not from the proposing school)



- b) one external academic peer (agreed in principle by the nominated coordinator and Clerk to the Committee, in accordance with guidance set out in [Quality Framework Section 0b: Appointing External Peers](#))
- c) an internal academic peer (typically a member of an Academic Board sub-committee but not from the proposing school and preferably with experience of managing provision delivered in partnership)
- d) a clerk (nominated by the Head of Quality & Enhancement).

### **The Collaborative Provision Committee approval panel programme**

21. A typical Collaborative Provision Committee approval panel programme will, as a minimum, include:

- a) a meeting with programme and partner representatives as appropriate to clarify any points arising from panel members' initial scrutiny of documentation
- b) a tour of specialist learning and teaching facilities relevant to the proposal where appropriate
- c) a meeting of the panel to discuss and agree the outcome of the approval event
- d) a meeting with programme and partner representatives to provide initial feedback on the outcome of the Collaborative Provision Committee approval panel.

22. The programme for each Collaborative Provision Committee approval panel will be agreed by the Clerk to the Collaborative Provision Committee in liaison with the approval panel convenor and nominated coordinator.

### **Information to be made available to the Collaborative Provision Committee's approval panel**

23. The Clerk to the Collaborative Provision Committee will circulate the following information set to panel members a minimum of 14 working days before the agreed date for the event:

- a) a programme for the meeting of the Collaborative Provision Committee approval panel
- b) the names, appointment and home institution of panel members



- c) the following documents which have been approved for circulation by the School Academic Lead for Quality on behalf of the School Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee:
- i) a programme specification which meets University expectations
  - ii) a brief and concise academic rationale to support the introduction of the proposed award or credit-bearing programme which clearly describes the following topics not included in the programme specification
    - the ways in which the proposal contributes to meeting the University's approved Strategy and the school strategic or operational plans
    - the market analysis undertaken by the programme leader to underpin the viability of the proposal
    - the management and administrative arrangements to support the mode of delivery
    - the outcome of the assessment of any potential risk that could affect adversely the University's reputation and standing as a result of delivering the proposal
    - the account given to the feedback and comment received from the external subject specialist peer on the appropriateness of the proposal with particular reference to subject area expectations regarding the content, academic challenge and learning, teaching and assessment practices
    - any other areas of interest that the programme team wish to bring to the attention of the panel.
  - e) electronic access to a module descriptor for each module within the proposed taught award or credit-bearing programme structure
  - f) the report of the school scrutiny event
  - g) a [CPC3](#) which provides panel members with a list of points to be considered during the Collaborative Provision Committee approval panel.

24. A minimum of seven working days before the visit, panel members will provide the clerk with a brief written commentary of points they wish to explore with programme team and school representatives during the meeting. This commentary will be developed using the CPC3.



25. Panel members' written commentaries are not shared with the nominated coordinator. Where practical, the Clerk to the Collaborative Provision Committee approval panel will aim to provide the nominated coordinator with a summary of panel members' comments on the proposal before the day of the meeting.

### **Scrutiny undertaken by the Collaborative Provision Committee's approval panel**

26. Using the CPC3 members of the Collaborative Provision Committee's approval panel will assess, using their academic experience and judgement, whether University expectations for the academic standard and quality of the student learning experience for a taught award or credit-bearing programmes are met. The panel will also provide comment and feedback on the overall appropriateness and quality and standard of the proposal.

### **Recording the outcome of the approval event**

27. Having scrutinised and discussed the proposal with the University and proposed partner programme teams the Collaborative Provision Committee's approval panel will record a decision as follows:

- a) **Approved without amendment** to the programme specification or supporting documentation.
- b) **Approved with recommendations** which the programme team will be encouraged to reflect on in implementing the proposal. Unlike conditions, recommendations do not need to be taken into account before the programme is offered to students. However, the first year review will provide an opportunity to explore with the programme team(s) what account was given to any recommendations made.
- c) **Approved with conditions** which must be addressed and the amended programme specification must be signed-off by the Collaborative Provision Committee's approval panel convenor before the proposal can be deemed to be approved. In such cases the panel will provide the programme team(s) with precise feedback on the matters to be addressed. Following discussion with the programme team(s) the panel will agree a date by which the proposal can be amended to take account of each condition which will enable the convenor to sign-off the proposal as being approved.
- d) **Not approved.** In the unlikely event that a Collaborative Provision Committee's approval panel does not believe that a proposal can be approved the panel will provide the programme team(s) with precise feedback on the matters to be addressed before the decision can be



reconsidered. In such cases the panel convenor will provide the Dean of School, School Academic Lead for Quality and appropriate School Support Service officers with the reason for this decision being made and precise feedback on the matters to be addressed before the decision can be reconsidered.

28. Students must not be offered a place on a programme until it has received academic approval and the collaboration agreement has been signed by both parties in accordance with [Quality Framework Section 4f: Signing the collaboration agreement](#). Prior to approval being granted a programme may be advertised but must clearly state that it is subject to formal approval.
29. The clerk to the approvals panel will provide a report which includes:
  - a) the names, appointment and home institution of panel members
  - b) detailed information on how comments and feedback from panel members have been addressed
  - c) the outcome reached
  - d) the period of approval granted by the panel which must not exceed five years
  - e) any conditions set by the panel
  - f) any recommendations made for consideration by the programme team
  - g) areas of good or innovative practice, strengths and achievements or areas for further development identified by panel members
30. The Collaborative Provision Committee and School Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee will receive the report on the outcome of each approval event with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of the collaborative programme design, development and approval process. Areas of good or innovative practice, strengths and achievements or areas for further development identified by the panel will be discussed with a view to disseminating relevant information University-wide through School Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee meeting minutes and the school annual summary report to Quality & Standards Committee as appropriate.
31. In addition, it is the responsibility of the School to incorporate the new programme into the schedule of Institution-led Review to ensure that it is reviewed no more than five years following approval, and in accordance with [Quality Framework Section 2b: Institution-led Review of Taught Programmes](#).



The updated review schedule must be approved by the University Quality & Standards Committee.

32. The report on the outcome of each approval event must be retained by the Clerk to Collaborative Provision Committee as a means of informing future internal or external audit, monitoring or review activities including first year review. The report should be retained until the programme is either formally re-approved or withdrawn, whichever is sooner.

### **Action to be taken after the proposal receives academic approval**

33. After the Collaborative Provision Committee's academic approval event the nominated coordinator is responsible for ensuring that:
  - a) the programme specification and all other paperwork is amended to take full account of any changes required by the Collaborative Provision Committee's academic approval panel
  - b) the amended paperwork is sent to the Clerk to the Collaborative Provision Committee by the date agreed at the approval event
  - c) Finance is notified
  - d) for overseas partnerships the International Programmes Manager is notified, for global online support centres the Global Online Enhancement Lead is notified and for UK-based partnerships the appropriate School Support Service officer is notified to enable the collaborative agreement to be finalised
  - e) the appropriate School Support Service Officer is notified to ensure the appropriate programme codes are set up in SITS
  - f) the University's International Programmes Manager is notified to enable a Project Proposal Form to be completed and a new project created in Agresso.
34. After the academic approval event the Clerk to the Collaborative Provision Committee is responsible for:
  - a) reviewing the amended paperwork sent by the nominated coordinator to ensure that approval panel requirements have been met
  - b) forwarding the amended paperwork to the Collaborative Provision Committee's approval panel convenor for final approval



- c) for overseas partnerships liaising with the University's International Programmes Manager regarding the preparation of the final collaboration agreement and [CPC5](#) for signature by the Director of Finance, Dean of School and the Convenor of Collaborative Provision Committee
- d) for global online support centres, liaising with the Global Online Enhancement Lead regarding the preparation of the final agreement and CPC5 for signature by the Director of Finance, Dean of School and the Convenor of Collaborative Provision Committee
- e) for UK-based partnerships liaising with the appropriate School Support Service officer regarding the preparation of the final collaboration agreement and preparing CPC5 for signature by the Director of Finance, Dean of School and the Convenor of Collaborative Provision Committee.

### **Amending taught award or credit-bearing provision delivered in partnership**

- 35. All proposals to amend taught award or credit-bearing provision delivered in partnership with another organisation must be submitted to Collaborative Provision Committee for consideration and approval.
- 36. The process for amending taught award or credit-bearing provision is set out in [Section 0c of the Quality Framework: Amending approved taught award or credit-bearing provision](#) and the same principles apply to provision delivered in partnership with another organisation.

### **Systematic re-approval of an approved collaborative programme**

- 37. The cyclical programme review process described in Quality Framework 2b Institution led Review of taught programmes provides an opportunity for programme teams to systematically review and re-approve all taught provision.



## **CPC3 – Points to be considered during the academic approval process**

This guide is intended to provide Collaborative Provision Committee's approval panel members with a list of potential topics to be considered when assessing, using their academic and professional experience and judgement, the overall appropriateness, quality and standard of a proposal for a new taught award or credit-bearing programme. It also provides panel members with indicative headings for setting out the points they wish to discuss with the programme team and partner representatives during the approval meeting. Where appropriate, a summary of panel members' comments will be shared with programme team and partners before the meeting takes place.

Please note, the prompts are intended to support panel members as they read through the documentation, and panel members should not feel obliged to comment on all of the topics, nor should members feel restricted in limiting comments to the themes listed below. Experience and expertise will determine the themes panel members would wish to explore further with the programme team.

The Quality & Standards team will continue to review and update this guide to ensure that it best supports the delivery of the University's approved Strategy and feedback is welcome from colleagues via [quality@napier.ac.uk](mailto:quality@napier.ac.uk)

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### **1. General comments and feedback on the proposal.**

- a) first overall impression of the proposal, for example, anything that you think is missing or anything that has pleased, surprised or disappointed you
- b) any perceived areas of good or innovative practice, strengths and achievements
- c) any areas where you consider further development or improvement would be of benefit
- d) any additional information that you would wish to have made available either before the panel meeting or on arrival at the meeting.

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### **2. Specific Themes for Consideration:**

- i) Contributing to the implementation of University Strategy. How effective is the proposal in providing a clear focus on the programme with local ownership and a holistic view of the student journey from enquiry to completion?
- ii) How effective is the proposal in indicating how the programme will contribute towards addressing the following specific key strategic deliverables:



- developing strong links with business
- encouraging articulation from partner colleges
- providing placement and enterprise opportunities for all students
- providing international study opportunities and increased outward mobility for all students
- encouraging student engagement with Edinburgh Napier Students' Association to enhance experience, engagement and volunteering
- encouraging effective programme representation and peer mentoring
- embracing innovation in learning and teaching and the use of technology to support learning
- adopting a pedagogic approach based on active learning and principles of assessment for learning.

**a) Academic standards** (information for commenting on this section will primarily be drawn from the programme specification)

- i) How effective is the proposal in taking appropriate account of external reference points in setting the academic standard of the proposed provision?
  - [The framework for qualifications of higher education institutions in Scotland](#)
  - relevant qualification and/or subject [benchmark statements](#)
  - professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements where appropriate.
- ii) Comment on the appropriateness of the intended learning outcomes required to achieve the final award and any exit awards available to students who do not complete the programme.
- iii) Comment on the extent to which the proposed learning, teaching and assessment approaches enable students to achieve the programme and exit award learning outcomes.
- iv) Comment on the extent to which graduate attributes internationalisation, research and enterprise are embedded within the programme.
- v) Comment on the extent of the mechanism and responsibilities in place for:
  - the management of academic standards



- the assessment, moderation and external examining of the proposed provision
- monitoring and reviewing the proposed provision and reporting on the outcome of such activity.

**b) Quality of learning opportunities.**

- i) Comment on the overall quality and coherence of the proposed student learning experience including academic and pastoral support and students' wider educational needs.
- ii) Comment on the mechanisms to enable students to provide the programme team with systematic feedback on their learning experience.
- iii) Comment on the extent of the mechanism and responsibilities in place for:
  - the management and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities
  - assuring that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained and enhanced
  - assuring that students are supported effectively
  - providing staff with access to personal development to facilitate the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities
  - ensuring that learning resources are accessible to students and sufficient to enable them to achieve the learning outcomes.
- iv) Comment on the mechanisms to ensure that learning resources are accessible to students and sufficient to enable them to achieve the learning outcomes.
- v) How effective is the proposal in supporting the strategic objective of providing students with a personalised learning experience through individual support?

**c) Published information.**

- i) Comment on the appropriateness of the mechanism and responsibilities for communicating information on the proposed provision to potential students and other stakeholders.
- ii) Comment on the appropriateness of the mechanism and responsibilities for assuring the accuracy and completeness of published information that is managed by the school.



**d) Partnership information.**

- i) Comment on the ability of the partner to deliver the proposed provision and support students' learning (for example, the adequacy of subject learning resources, the experience, qualifications and availability of academic staff and the provision of social and recreational facilities).
  - ii) Comment on the partner's understanding of UK higher education quality assurance and enhancement expectations (for example, knowledge of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, a clear understanding of the University's expectations on the provision of student assessment feedback and the annual monitoring process).
  - iii) Comment on the extent of partnership working between University and partner programme teams.
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## CPC4 – Key dates and activities associated with the academic approval process.

This table has been produced to provide a quick reference point of the key dates and associated activities leading up to the approval event at the partner institution.

| DATE   | ACTIVITY  |
|--|---|
| A minimum of six weeks before the date of the approval event.          | The programme proposal and supporting documents are completed by the programme team including taking account of comment from internal and external academic peers as appropriate.       |
| A minimum of 28 working days before the date of the approval event.    | The programme proposal and supporting documents are subjected to a process of internal scrutiny overseen by the School Academic Lead for Quality.                                       |
| A minimum of 21 working days before the date of the approval event.    | The School Academic Lead for Quality authorises the release of the programme proposal and supporting documents to the Clerk to Collaborative Provision Committee.                       |
| A minimum of 14 working days before the date of the approval event.    | The Clerk to Collaborative Provision Committee forwards programme proposal and supporting documents to panel members.   |
| A minimum of seven working days before the date of the approval event. | Approval panel members send their comments on the proposal to the clerk to the approval panel.  |
| A minimum of one day before the approval event.                        | Clerk to the approval panel sends a summary of panel members' comments to the programme team for information.   |
| Day 0  | Approval event at the partner institution.  |
| A maximum of 10 working days after the date of the approval event.     | Clerk to the approval event ensures that the report is completed, approved by the convenor and sent to panel members and the programme team for comment on matters of factual accuracy. |
| A maximum of 14 working days after the date of the approval event.     | Clerk to the approval event ensures that a final report is agreed by all panel members.   |
| A maximum of 15 working days after the date of the approval event.     | Clerk to the approval event publishes the report.   |

