

Collaborative Partner Review Process

Introduction

Partner review is a process used to review academic collaborative partnerships to confirm that they continue to operate well, that the quality and standards are good, and that the partnership should remain in continuing approval. Partners are subject to partner review after the first three years of operation and then every five years, although London Met reserves the right to instigate a partner review at any point during the lifetime of a partnership. The review would usually take place at the location of delivery of courses but may be undertaken online using a platform such as MS Teams or be a hybrid event with some panel members in attendance at the location of delivery with others joining online.

Where a partner institution is in termination and is due to undergo a partner review in the final year of operation of the course, the review would usually be brought forward by one year. This will allow the panel to make conditions and recommendations in relation to the teaching out of the courses and the management of student experience through the period of transition.

Purpose of the review

The purpose of the partner review is to:

- Undertake a periodic review of the courses offered by the partner institution (franchised courses are subject to internal review and therefore course content would not be reviewed as part of the collaborative partner review process);
- Provide an opportunity to review the nature of the collaborative relationship, and resolve any problems that might exist;
- Review the academic and administrative infrastructure of the partner institution to ensure that it continues to be able to offer a suitable learning environment for students;
- Review student outcomes to ensure that the quality of student experience continues to be adequate;
- Review whether further enhancements could be made to aspects of the partner institution's own quality assurance procedures;
- Identify what is working well, and what is worthy of wider dissemination

The scope of the partner review will, to some extent, be determined by the nature of the collaboration; for franchise courses the focus will be on achievement of academic standards and delivery of the approved course, the quality of the student experience and activities to assure and enhance standards and quality; for other types of provision, such as validated courses, a review of the course specification and course content will also be included. A full set of up to date course documentation will be required for all types of partnership to ensure that, post-event, Course Level Agreements can be updated accordingly.

Planning for the review – introductory meeting

Following notification of a partner review, an informal preparatory meeting will be held with the partner institution. Relevant staff from the collaborative partner and London Met will be invited to

attend this meeting. This will include: collaborative partner and London Met link persons such as the Academic Liaison Tutor and School Head of Collaborative Partnerships; a representative from the Partnerships Office; relevant staff from the Academic Quality and Development (AQD) team and any other staff which the partner or London Met consider should attend the meeting. The meeting will discuss the purpose of the review, requirements of the partner institution and London Met School(s) in the review, discuss logistics and identification of issues that may impact on the review.

Further Planning meetings

In the run up to the review, planning meetings will usually take place with academic and administrative link persons at the collaborative partner and London Met. The meetings will usually consider a first/latest draft of the partnership narrative, and consider progress with the logistical elements of the review, such as progress with the provision of any documentation required, and progress with appointing the review panel. Meetings with AQD to support the process and answer any further queries will also be offered.

Panel Composition

The size of a partner review panel will depend on the size of the partner and breadth of courses offered.

- A member of London Met staff with significant experience in quality assurance, and who is independent of the collaborative partner and School(s) under review is appointed as Chair of the panel;
- A current London Met student will usually form part of the panel;
- One member of London Met staff, preferably an academic member of staff, unconnected to the School(s) involved in the review. If all London Met Schools have provision with the partner, then this person should be from a subject area without provision, or a senior professional services staff member should be used;
- Early in the process, the partner or academic London Met staff involved in the review may nominate appropriate external advisors to take part in the review. There will normally be two external subject advisors, although this could be reduced or expanded according to the nature of the review. The external advisors must be from different institutions. The suitability of the external advisors is determined by AQD. The following criteria are taken into account:
 - The depth of subject knowledge;
 - The relevance of subject knowledge;
 - Prior experience of teaching on courses at the same level or above;
 - Impartiality (the nominee should not have any formal links with London Met during the last five years as a former member of staff or student or as an external examiner);
 - Professional expertise, including, where possible, experience of collaborative provision;
 - Prior experience as a QAA reviewer or Audit with collaborative arrangements

It is unlikely that any single nominee will meet all the requirements. In making judgments about the suitability of the proposed external subject advisers AQD takes into account the overall balance of expertise presented by the external advisers. AQD may reject a nominee or require additional external subject advisers to be sought in order to ensure the balance of the panel.

It is the responsibility of the collaborating institution to confirm that they are satisfied that there are

no conflicts of interest with regards to external subject advisors.

Review Documentation requirements

The self-evaluation document is the key document for the partner review process and will be the basis for the panel's enquiries. This document should be produced jointly by the relevant London Met School(s) and the partner institution. The self-evaluation document is essentially a self-study by both parties of the means used to assure quality and standards in that collaborative partnership, and the effectiveness of those means. It describes and reviews organisational changes since institutional approval and evaluates the operation of the course(s) since the last approval/review and identifies the future direction of the partnership. The self-evaluation document should:

- Describe the collaborative partnership including a summary and explanation of the development of the partnership over the period under review;
- Analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the partnership;
- Summarise any issues raised about the quality and operation of the partnership during the period being reviewed and how these have been addressed;
- Provide a view of the effectiveness of the means by which London Met School(s) assure themselves of the quality of the learning opportunities and student support offered through the partnership;
- Provide a view of the effectiveness of the means by which the London Met School(s) assure themselves of the standards of credits and/or awards gained through the partnership;
- Consider and evaluate student outcomes on the course(s) under review;
- Identify any other issues which the course team's own evaluation of the partnership has raised and how these are to be addressed;
- Address any external developments which have affected, or will affect, the partnership;
- Provide an index of the evidence that it cites and that will be available to the review team.

The supporting documentation listed below must be made available to the panel so that it can be considered as part of the review. Where possible, it should be shared at least six weeks in advance of the review event. In most cases, arrangements for the provision of the documents will be with the collaborative partner/London Met staff, although in a few cases AQD will be able to provide the documents, such as the course specs / module specs and the IMoA/CLAs. If necessary, more detailed discussion on the provision of documents can be agreed during the review planning phase. The AQD servicing officer will be responsible for sharing any documents with the panel.

- Course guides/student handbook(s) for every course under review;
- Course specification for every course;
- Report from the previous approval/review event;
- London Met Annual/Continuous monitoring reports and action plans for the three previous years;
- External examiner's reports and responses for the three previous years;
- Evidence of student voice activity, such as course committee meetings, and outcomes and actions from any internal or external student feedback mechanisms;
- Details of relevant staff development activity – both within the collaborative partner and between London Met and the partner;
- Reports by any external regulatory visits, including professional bodies (where appropriate);

- Student data – both intake data, as well as outcomes data such as progression and completion data covering the last three intakes;
- A description of student support/wellbeing services at the partner and, where appropriate, at London Met, plus any recent analysis of student use, subject to normal constraints of confidentiality in respect of counselling and similar activities;
- Some analysis of student data and outcomes for the last three years (taken from assessment board data, where available)
- Marking and feedback sheets/templates and assessment criteria / rubrics;
- Examples of students' work to reflect the range of levels and attainment – including examination papers/scripts, coursework, project/lab reports/scripts, project reports and dissertation;
- ALT reports for the last three years for all courses run with the partner;
- Any other documentation referenced in the self-evaluation document.

Programme for the Collaborative Review

The partner review process is normally conducted over a period of one to two days, depending on the scale of the provision that is to be considered as part of the review and taking into account time differences for overseas partners. It would normally take place at the premises of the collaborative partner but may also be conducted as an online event using a platform such as MS Teams. It is possible to adjust the length of the review if required with the agreement of the Quality Manager (Partnerships)

Although the agenda will have been set in advance, this will be confirmed by a private panel meeting at the beginning of the review. The review programme includes a meeting with students, a tour of the physical resources available to support the partnership and meetings with staff from both London Met and the partner institution to discuss the various aspects of the partnership.

The meeting with students should include existing students and where possible, former students. No members of London Met or collaborative partner staff will attend this meeting.

The meeting with staff would usually include teaching members of staff from the partner institution and ALTs from London Met.

Outcomes of the Partner Review

Verbal feedback on the outcome of the review will be provided at the end of the review event. The review panel may either:

- Approve the continuing collaborative delivery of the course(s) without conditions;
- Approve the continuing collaborative delivery of the course(s) with conditions and/or recommendations;
- Withhold approval.
- A review panel may decide that they would like to approve the continuing collaborative delivery of the course(s) but have significant concerns which they do not feel can be entirely resolved through the setting of conditions. In such instances the review team may decide to approve the continuing delivery of the course(s) for a shorter period of time (usually one year). Following such an outcome a further review will be arranged within the stipulated timeframe.

Following the review event, a report will be produced by AQD outlining the discussions of the panel and the review outcomes. This report is formally considered through the Collaborative Partnerships Committee (CPC). It will also be submitted to the relevant School level Learning, Teaching and Quality meeting so that the decision of the review panel can be endorsed. The report is also shared with the collaborative partner. Partner institutions will be required to work with London Met Schools to ensure that any conditions are met by the deadline. The response to any conditions is sent to the AQD servicing officer, who, in liaison with the panel chair, will establish whether the conditions have been met and feedback to the partner and London Met staff on the outcome. If the conditions are still not met, a further response will be required.

The collaborative partner and London Met staff will also prepare an action plan based on the outcomes of the review process, which will include updates on progress with any recommendations set, and this will be monitored through CPC.

Following consideration of the collaborative review report the Head of the Partnerships Office will be informed of the outcomes and will write to the partner institution to confirm the period for which the courses will be reapproved and issue relevant legal documents for signature.