

Collaborative Academic Partnerships Processes

1. Introduction

- 1.1 London Metropolitan University takes ultimate responsibility for the academic standards and quality of awards given in its name, irrespective of where these are delivered or who provides them. Arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with collaborative academic partners are implemented securely and managed effectively. Oversight of collaborative academic partnerships is included in the terms of reference of University level committees to ensure that this is embedded institutionally and this, in turn, is reflected in the terms of reference for School level committees to ensure consistent practice across the University.

2. Overview of roles and responsibilities

- 2.1. In the first instance, where prospective academic partners want to form a partnership with the University to deliver collaborative taught courses, the potential partnership must be considered by the Head of Partnerships and the Pro Vice Chancellor, Student Recruitment and Business Development, to ensure that the proposal aligns with the university's collaborative strategy. The Pro Vice Chancellor Academic Development must also be consulted to ensure that the proposal aligns with the university academic portfolio and that the relevant School(s) of the university can provide the necessary support for the academic development. The AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) will support both Partnerships and School colleagues in taking the proposal through the phases of outline approval and moving towards Institutional Approval and course validation.
- 2.2. In the case where a prospective academic partner wishes to work with the University to form an articulation agreement the partnership is considered by the Head of International Development, Heads of Academic Portfolio and the Pro Vice Chancellor, Student Recruitment and Business Development.
- 2.3 Once a collaborative academic partnership or course is approved, the Partnerships Facilitator has lead responsibility for generating the legal agreements (Institutional Memoranda of Agreement and Course Level Agreements) that will be signed by the University's Vice Chancellor and the representative of the collaborative academic institution. Without these documents being in place, no students may be taught on London Met courses by the collaborative academic partner.
- 2.4 The ongoing day-to-day management of collaborative academic partnerships sits at School level, normally through the Academic Liaison Tutor (ALT) appointed to the academic partnership. The ALT will ensure that the partnership adheres to London Met's systems and procedures, taking advice as necessary from the AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) on quality assurance matters. At a more strategic level,



there should be regular contact between senior members of the School, the AQD team and equivalent colleagues at the partner institution.

- 2.5 At the partner institution, a Course Leader will be appointed and will act as the main course contact. All staff involved in the delivery of London Met awards must be approved by the university via the course validation or subsequent approval/monitoring.
- 2.6 For a full description of the roles and responsibilities of the above, and the Partnership lifecycle, see the Partnerships Operational Manual.

3. Due diligence and institutional approval procedure for a new collaborative academic partner

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 London Metropolitan University has a comprehensive process for considering and approving new collaborative academic partnerships, which is designed to identify and mitigate any risks that arise through operating in the specific partnership model. This process is followed for any potential collaborative academic partner who will be responsible for delivering a taught award(s) of the university.
- 3.1.2 At any time within the process detailed below the decision may be taken to discontinue the institutional approval process. AQD will retain details of any enquiries and due diligence undertaken and include details in the annual report on Institutional Approval to the Collaborative Taught Provision Sub-Committee (CTPSC).

3.2. Initial investigation

- 3.2.1 Initial investigations relating to a potential new partnership should be considered by the Head of Partnerships, on behalf of the PVC Student Recruitment and Business Development. The Head of Partnerships must ensure that the proposal is supported by the PVC Academic Development and the relevant Head(s) of School. AQD should also be consulted at an early stage to advise on possible timescales for approval and the most suitable type of arrangement i.e. franchise, validation etc. If all parties agree there is potential to move forward, the AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) will ask the prospective partner to complete the [Institutional Information Form \(AQDC0001\)](#).
- 3.2.2 The AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) will also submit a request to the University's Engagement Department to complete the [Reputational Check Form \(AQDC002\)](#).
- 3.2.3 If the reputational check is unproblematic, the AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) will secure the additional approvals required at this point. The Head of Partnerships; Head of School(s); Director of AQD and Pro Vice-Chancellor, Student Recruitment and Business Development will sign the Reputational Check Form. Once the full



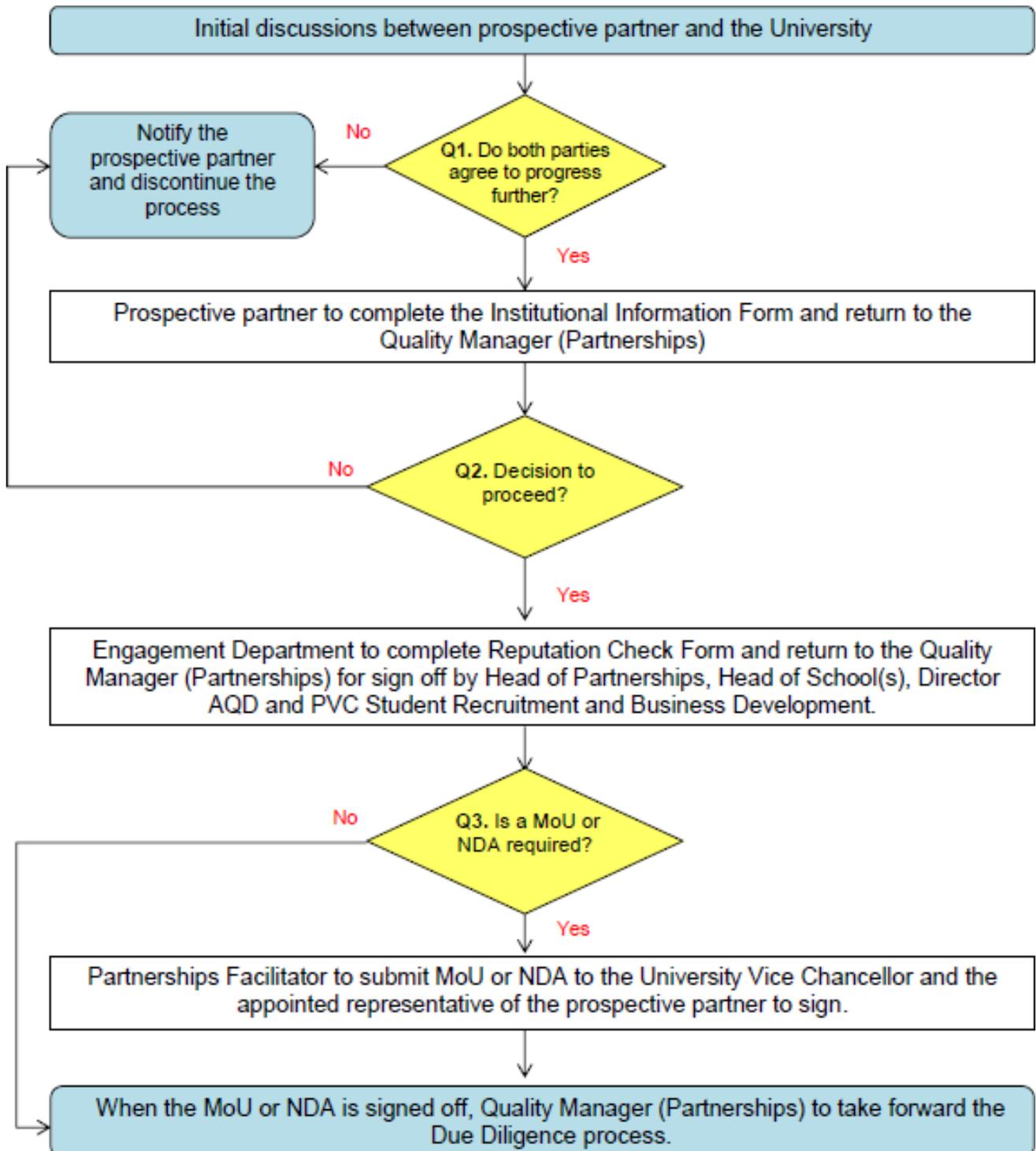
approvals have been secured, depending on the nature of the prospective partnership, the Partnerships Facilitator may prepare a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) (AQDC020) or a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) (AQDC021) for the University Vice Chancellor and the appointed representative of the prospective partner to sign.

3.2.4 An MoU or NDA will be required at this stage in the following instances:

- (a) MoU: A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) should be used for all prospective international collaborative academic partnerships. It is non-legally binding but is an agreement to take the process forward.
- (b) NDA: A non-disclosure agreement should be used in the case where the University has to submit confidential information as part of due diligence being conducted by a prospective academic partner and/or third party organisation.

In other instances the process will move straight to the due diligence stage.

Initial Investigation Process Flowchart





3.3 Due Diligence

3.3.1 After the MoU/ NDA is signed by the University Vice Chancellor and the prospective partner, the AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) will ask the prospective partner to complete the [Collaborative Academic Partner Due Diligence Form \(AQDC004\)](#) and provide supporting evidence. This will include the following:

- i. Financial information to include: name and address of auditors; last three years of audited accounts; budget for current year; financial forecasts for next three years; insurance policies (due to the sensitive information within these documents, they will only be shared with the AQD Office and the University's Finance Office)
- ii. Legal Registration Document
- iii. Governance structure (organogram) and committees
- iv. CVs of Management and senior staff
- v. Resources Statement – academic and support staff (indicating F/T and P/T) and physical resources
- vi. Strategic Plan
- vii. Quality Assurance documents e.g. Quality Manual and all related policies
- viii. Academic Regulations
- ix. Equality and anti-bribery policies
- x. References from existing institutional partners and current/previous students (AQDC006).

The Head of Partnerships will support the prospective partner, where necessary, in understanding, and responding to, the documentation request, and in preparing for institutional approval.

3.4 Site visit of the prospective partner

3.4.1 A visit of the prospective partner's site will occur after the [Collaborative Academic Partner Due Diligence Form \(AQDC004\)](#) and all supporting evidence are received and initially considered by the AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships). If the AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) has serious concerns from the due diligence in relation to the potential partnership meeting London Met requirements for the assurance of quality and standards, progress to a site visit should not occur until the concerns are fully resolved. Discussion with the partner, Head of Partnerships and Director of AQD may be required to agree the way forward.

3.4.2 The purpose of the site visit is to ensure that students taught there would receive an experience comparable to that, which would be available on campus at London Metropolitan University. The Head of Partnerships or nominee approved by AQD will



conduct the visit. The outline agenda for the site visit should be followed ([AQDC003](#)) After the site visit, the [Collaborative Site Visit Report \(AQDC007\)](#) must be submitted to the AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships), together with any additional evidence e.g. photographs of the site, CVs of teaching staff.

3.5 Collaborative Risk Assessment Report

- 3.5.1 The AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) and a nominated member of the University Secretary's Office and Finance Office are responsible for completing the [Collaborative Risk Assessment Report \(AQDC008\)](#), which is based on consideration of the [Collaborative Academic Partner Due Diligence Form \(AQDC004\)](#), the [Collaborative Site Visit Report \(AQDC007\)](#) and supporting evidence for both. Once this report has been approved by Director: AQD and the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Student Recruitment and Business Development, the AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) will submit it to the Collaborative Taught Provision Sub-Committee (CTPSC) for consideration and potential approval. The CTPSC should consider the prospective partner and proposed delivery and ensure it is in alignment with the University's Partnership Strategy and Guiding Principles. The CTPSC is able to make recommendations or highlight conditions that need to be addressed at the institutional approval event, should it agree that one may be held.

3.6 Collaborative Academic Business Case

- 3.6.1 Concurrently whilst the Collaborative Risk Assessment Report is being completed and submitted to CTPSC, the Head of Partnerships or nominee will be responsible for completing the [Collaborative Academic Business Case Form \(AQDC005\)](#). This must be submitted to the AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) for consideration and potential approval at the Academic Portfolio Committee (see Chapter 2 of the Quality Manual for details). The Head of the relevant School(s) must sign off the business case and will have responsibility for presenting the Collaborative Academic Business Case at APC.
- 3.6.2 Where consideration is occurring of a partnership in which the language of delivery of some or all courses will not be English, reference must be made to the University policy. Any exceptional or unusual circumstances must also be brought to the attention of APC.
- 3.6.3 By this point it will be important for the School to have nominated an Academic Liaison Tutor (ALT) to support the partner with the course development for validation. For further information on Course Validation, please visit Chapter 2 in the Quality Manual.

3.7 Outline Approval

3.7.1 Outline approval is secured when:

- i. The Academic Portfolio Committee (APC) has approved the [Collaborative Academic Business Case \(AQDC005\)](#).
- ii. The Collaborative Taught Provision Sub-Committee (CTPSC) has approved the [Collaborative Risk Assessment Report \(AQDC008\)](#).

3.7.2 Outline approval means that the proposal can progress to the Institutional Approval event stage. The approval/non-approval decision is captured in the minutes of the APC and CTPSC. The minutes will also include any recommended mitigation for identified risks, which must be considered at the Institutional Approval event. APC approval also stipulates when course delivery may commence.

3.7.3 If APC and/or CTPSC do not approve the proposal and no further actions can be taken to overturn the decision, the outcome should be communicated in writing to the prospective partner by the AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships).

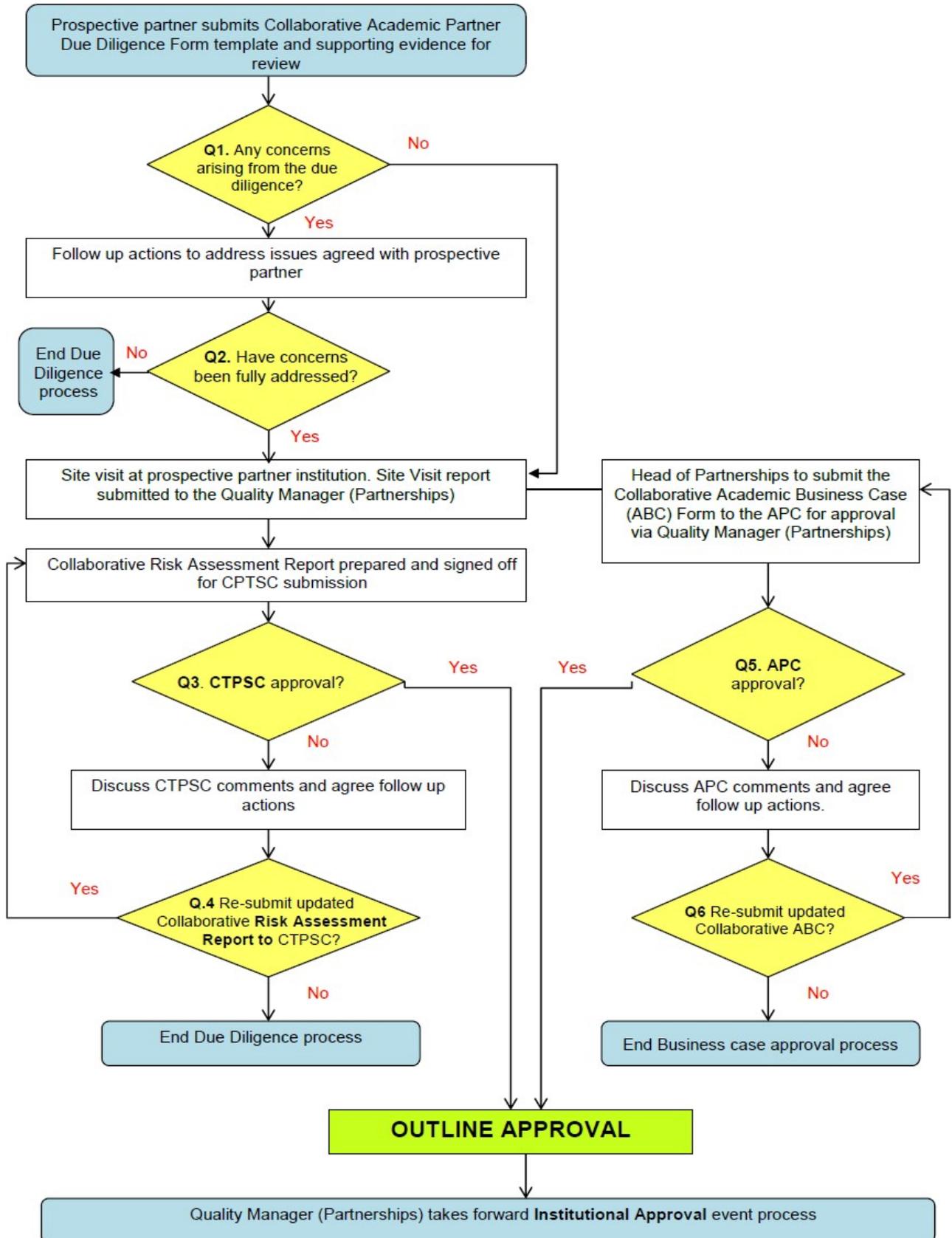
3.7.4 Once outline approval is granted the AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) will request the nomination of the Academic Liaison Tutor (ALT) by the relevant School(s).

3.7.5 Outline approval means that the proposal can progress to the Institutional Approval event stage. The approval/non-approval decision is captured in the minutes of the APC and CTPSC. The minutes will also include any recommended mitigation for identified risks, which must be considered at the Institutional Approval event. APC approval also stipulates when course delivery may commence.

3.7.6 If APC and/or CTPSC do not approve the proposal and no further actions can be taken to overturn the decision, the outcome should be communicated in writing to the prospective partner by the AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships).

3.7.7 Once outline approval is granted the AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) will request the nomination of the Academic Liaison Tutor (ALT) by the relevant School(s).

Outline Approval Process Flowchart Diagram





3.8 Institutional approval event – arranging a date

- 3.8.1 Once outline approval is granted, the AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships), in discussion with the School(s) and the potential partner, will make arrangements for the Institutional Approval and course(s) validation event. By this point it will be important for the School to have nominated an Academic Liaison Tutor (ALT) to support the partner with the course design and documentation for the validation event, as this is likely to follow on immediately after Institutional Approval. For further information on Course Validation, please visit Chapter 2 in the Quality Manual.
- 3.8.2 The Institutional Approval event will usually take place at the partner institution and precedes the course validation event. Any exceptions to the location of the event can only be approved by the CTPSC on the recommendation of the Director AQD.
- 3.8.3 The institutional approval and course validation events must usually be held at least six months ahead of any planned course delivery. The course validation will only go ahead with a successful institutional approval event.
- 3.8.4 The University charges a fixed fee plus costs for the Institutional Approval event. The AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) can advise on fees.

3.9 Institutional approval event – documentation to be considered

- 3.9.1 Much of the documentation for the Institutional Approval event will have been made available at the due diligence stage (see section 3.3). However, the partner may be required to refresh or provide more comprehensive information to provide context for the panel on the nature, history, operation, and the potential of the institution. The AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) will usually require the full information from the prospective partner six weeks prior to the event. The panel should receive the collated documentation from the AQD Office four weeks prior to the event.
- 3.9.2 The AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) or a nominated member of AQD is responsible for preparing the [Institutional Approval Event Agenda, and membership list \(AQDC009\)](#).
- 3.9.3 In addition to the agenda and briefing note, institutional approval documentation will typically include the following:
- i. Background information
 - ii. Collaborative Site Visit Report
 - iii. Collaborative Academic Business Case (abridged)
 - iv. Legal Registration Document
 - v. Governance structure (organogram) and committees
 - vi. CVs of Management and senior staff
 - vii. Resources Statement – academic and support staff (indicating F/T and P/T) and physical resources
 - viii. Strategic Plan

- ix. Quality Assurance documents e.g. Quality Manual and all associated policies
- x. Academic Regulations
- xi. Equality and anti-bribery policies

3.9.4 AQD will be advised by the University's Finance Office on the financial standing of the potential partner institution, to provide assurance that the risk of the partnership failing on account of this is low. This information will not be shared with the Panel.

3.10 Institutional approval event – panel membership

3.10.1 The Institutional Approval event is conducted by a small panel of University staff (academic Chair from another School, a senior member of the AQD Office and, on occasion, an internal member also without the School). The panel usually includes an experienced external member with a background in collaborative provision. The Secretary to the Panel should be the AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) or another appointed member of AQD.

3.10.2 The Chair should have significant experience of collaborative academic provision and an ability to critically evaluate institutional capacity to deliver University provision. Other panel members should also be experienced in collaborative provision and quality and standards management. Where appropriate, additional panel members with specialist expertise such as online learning will be drawn from the University.

3.10.3 External Advisors on the panel should have broad experience of UK higher education at a senior level and be capable of independent judgement. Impartiality is further safeguarded by ensuring that external advisors have not had any association with the University within the last five years prior to the Institutional Approval event. This would normally exclude former employees who have worked at the University within the last five years. AQD are responsible for conducting Right to Work checks on all External Advisors and confirming appointment prior to any documentation being sent. For further information on the Right to Work check process please click [here](#). External advisors are required to provide initial feedback on the documentation, participate fully in the event and submit a post-event report to the AQD Office.

3.10.4 Guided by the Chair, the panel are asked to form a view on the strengths and weaknesses of the potential partner in terms of governance, capacity and delivery systems. In particular consideration must be given to any risk report mitigation as recorded in the CTPSC minutes. The panel also needs to assess the likelihood of the proposed partnership being mutually beneficial and operationally successful, in that the prospective partner will have the capacity to deliver the university's awards to the required academic standards.

3.11 Institutional approval event – attendees

- 3.11.1 The AQD officer will liaise with the prospective partner and confirm the attendees for the Institutional Approval event. Attendees from the Partner will include senior management and teaching and professional services staff.
- 3.11.2 There should be an opportunity for the event panel to meet existing students. Comments made by students can be included in the outcomes report but the individual student must not be directly quoted.
- 3.11.3 A tour of the partner facilities will always be required. This should include classrooms, library areas and non-teaching communal areas.

3.12 Institutional approval event – outcomes

- 3.12.1 At the end of the meeting the Institutional Approval panel must recommend one of three outcomes:
 - i. recommend approval;
 - ii. recommend approval subject to one or more conditions;
 - iii. not recommend approval.

The panel may also make commendations and recommendations.

If the approval is subject to conditions then a date must be specified for the completion of the conditions.

- 3.12.2 The Secretary to the Panel will produce the outcomes report within five working days of the event. A full Institutional Approval event report is subsequently written for CTPSC and will include the post event report from the external advisor(s). This report will detail more fully the reasons for the panel's decision and its assessment of the ability of the prospective partner to deliver London Met awards to the required academic standards. CTPSC will use the full Institutional Approval report as the basis for its decision on institutional approval.
- 3.12.3 The prospective partner is responsible for meeting all conditions set by the panel by the deadline date agreed. All documentation to support meeting the conditions should be sent to the Secretary to the Panel. All conditions must be met before the institutional approval can be confirmed and contracts established.
- 3.12.4 Recommendations by the panel must be addressed alongside the response to the conditions of approval. Recommendations should also be considered in the annual monitoring course log at the Institutional Review event which will normally takes place after three years in the first instance.
- 3.12.5 Once all documentation has been received, the AQD Quality Manager

(Partnerships) will liaise with the Chair of the event to review the responses and confirm which conditions have been met. If the prospective partner meets all the set conditions, the Chair will recommend institutional approval to the CTPSC. The Chair's sign off must be recorded in writing (AQDC016). If part or none of the conditions are met, the AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) will liaise with the Chair of the event and communicate the items that need to be addressed and recommended actions to take to the prospective partner. A new deadline date will be agreed between the prospective partner, the Chair of the event and the AQD Office.

- 3.12.6 It is important to note that any delays in meeting conditions can potentially affect the start date of delivering proposed courses. Courses cannot run until the institutional approval and course validation is confirmed and relevant contracts are in place.
- 3.12.7 The AQD Officer is responsible for notifying the approved partner of the outcome in writing and is responsible for notifying relevant colleagues across the University of the outcome.

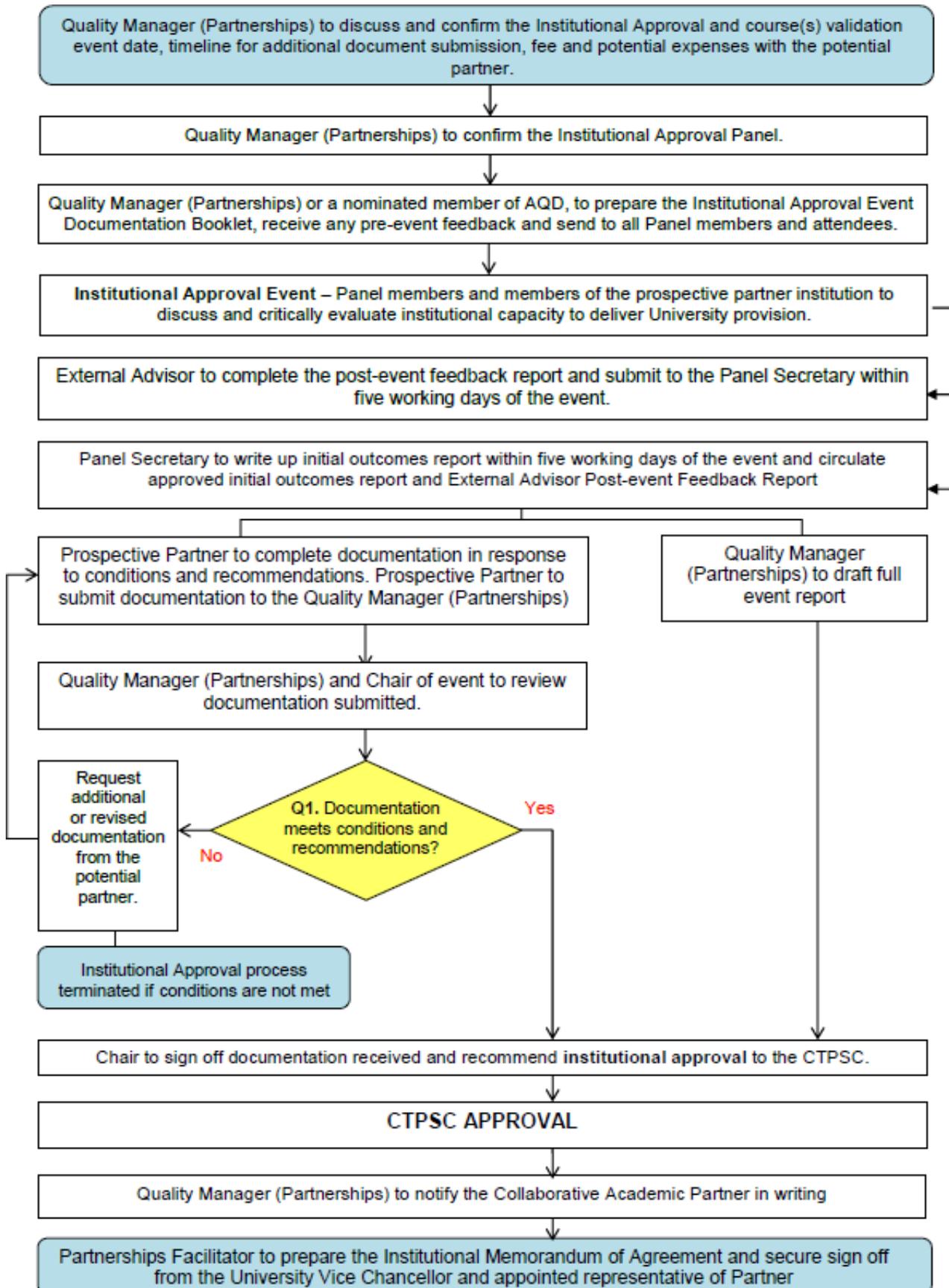
3.13 Institutional Memorandum of Agreement (IMoA)

- 3.13.1 The Institutional Memorandum of Agreement (IMoA) (AQDC017) sets out the contractual arrangements between the University and a collaborative academic partner. The period for institutional approval detailed in the IMoA is usually three years for the initial approval and thereafter five years.
- 3.13.2 When the institutional approval process is completed, the Partnerships Facilitator will liaise with the partner and the School(s) regarding the Institutional Memorandum of Agreement to agree drafts and to take this forward to finalisation and sign off. Sign-off must be secured from the University Vice Chancellor and the appointed representative of the new partner.
- 3.13.3 The IMoA needs at least one associated Course Level Agreement (CLA) (AQDC022) to be brought in to force.
- 3.13.4 The Partnerships Facilitator and the AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) will liaise closely to ensure that all necessary contracts are in place before delivery commences at the new partner.

3.14 Change of ownership

- 3.5.1 Change of ownership of an approved collaborative academic partner will require a refresh of due diligence and institutional approval. This may be a purely desk-based process or require a new institutional approval event. Director AQD will advise. In all cases new contracts will be required to reflect the change of ownership and the university's relationship with a new institution.

Institutional approval process flowchart diagram



4. Process for Approval of new sites or campuses of approved institutions

4.1. Introduction

- 4.1.1. A site visit for a new site or campus of an approved institution is undertaken in the following scenarios:
- i. When an existing collaborative academic partner moves to a new site
 - ii. When an existing collaborative academic partner wishes to deliver London Met provision at an additional site.
- 4.1.2. The purpose of the site visit for a new site or campus of an approved partner is to ensure the suitability of the academic environment, to confirm comparability of the student experience and maintain quality and standards across all sites at which London Met courses are delivered. The relationship between the new site or campus and the operation of other approved sites, and the partner operation as a whole, will be considered as part of the review of suitability. Arrangements for managing multi- site delivery will be reviewed. Consideration should also be given to the type of courses that will be delivered at the site.

4.2. Business case approval

- 4.2.1. The [Collaborative Academic Additional Site Business Case Form \(AQDC010\)](#) should be completed by the Head of Partnerships. Once all necessary sign-offs are recorded on the form, it should be submitted to the AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) to forward for Academic Portfolio Committee (APC) consideration. The Head of the relevant School (s) will have responsibility for presenting the Collaborative Academic Additional Site Business Case Form to APC. A site visit cannot be conducted prior to APC approval.

4.3. Due diligence of new teaching site

- 4.3.1. Prior to a site visit being arranged, the AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) will identify the documentation required from the collaborative academic partner to inform the panel undertaking the site visit.
- 4.3.2. The documentation requirement is based on the following list:
- i. Document/s detailing the legal status and ownership of the new site or campus
 - ii. Document/s detailing the arrangements for lease of the new site or campus (if not owned by the collaborative partner)
 - iii. Documents detailing the insurance arrangements which will be in place in respect of the delivery centre's responsibilities and liabilities towards students (i.e. public liability and professional indemnity insurance)

- iv. Details of the management and organisational structure of the new site or campus and relationship with other site/s
- v. Description of the physical and human resources available at the new site or campus, including student support services
- vi. Description of the quality assurance arrangements that will be in place at the delivery centre for:
 - curriculum development, where applicable;
 - teaching, learning and assessment methods;
 - feedback to students on assessed work;
 - tracking student progression and achievement;
 - monitoring and review of courses;
 - collection and evaluation of student feedback;
 - student academic and pastoral support;
 - management and administration of the assessment process;
 - student complaints and academic misconduct;
 - student engagement;
 - maintenance of student records.
 - staff appointment, monitoring and development

The AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) will review the documentation submitted by the partner in advance of the visit and provide a brief for the panel undertaking the visit, to support their understanding of the operation of the new site or campus.

4.4. Undertaking the site visit

- 4.4.1 The AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) will organise the date of the visit, in association with the collaborative academic partner. The aim of the visit is to examine the suitability of the academic environment in which London Met courses will be offered, including the staff team, academic and physical resources, and student support services.
- 4.4.2 The scale of the site visit will be as follows:
 - a) Where courses are to be delivered by a new team of academic staff at a new site the visit panel will comprise:
 - A senior member of staff from the School (Chair)
 - Officer to the event
 - External assessor (in relation to the course validation, input may be by

correspondence as determined by AQD)

The Academic Liaison Tutor (ALT) may also be in attendance.

- b) Where the provision at the new site is to be delivered by staff that already teach at another approved campus, the visit panel will comprise a senior member of staff of the School, plus the officer to the event.

The Academic Liaison Tutor (ALT) may also be in attendance.

- c) Where the additional location represents only a teaching location (all the teaching staff are employed and based at the main site, and all student support and learning resources are provided from the main site or via e-delivery), the visit may be undertaken by a senior member of the School staff or exceptionally the Academic Liaison Tutor (ALT) as agreed by the Director of AQD. They will complete the Site Visit report.

- d) Where a site visit is required as a result of a move of premises, the visit will be undertaken by a senior member of the School staff or exceptionally the Academic Liaison Tutor (ALT), as agreed by the Director of AQD. They will complete the Site Visit report.

4.5. Site Visit - Outcomes

4.5.1. At the end of the site visit the panel must recommend one of three outcomes:

- i. recommend approval;
- ii. recommend approval subject to one or more conditions;
- iii. not recommend approval.

The panel may also make recommendations. If the approval is subject to conditions then a date must be specified for the completion of the conditions.

4.5.2. A Collaborative Site Visit Report (AQDC007) should be completed by the Head of Partnerships with supporting paperwork and submitted to the AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships). The report will be received and considered by the CTPSC on behalf of the LTQ Committee. London Met provision cannot be delivered at an additional site prior to CTPSC approval.

4.5.3 The AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) is responsible for communicating the

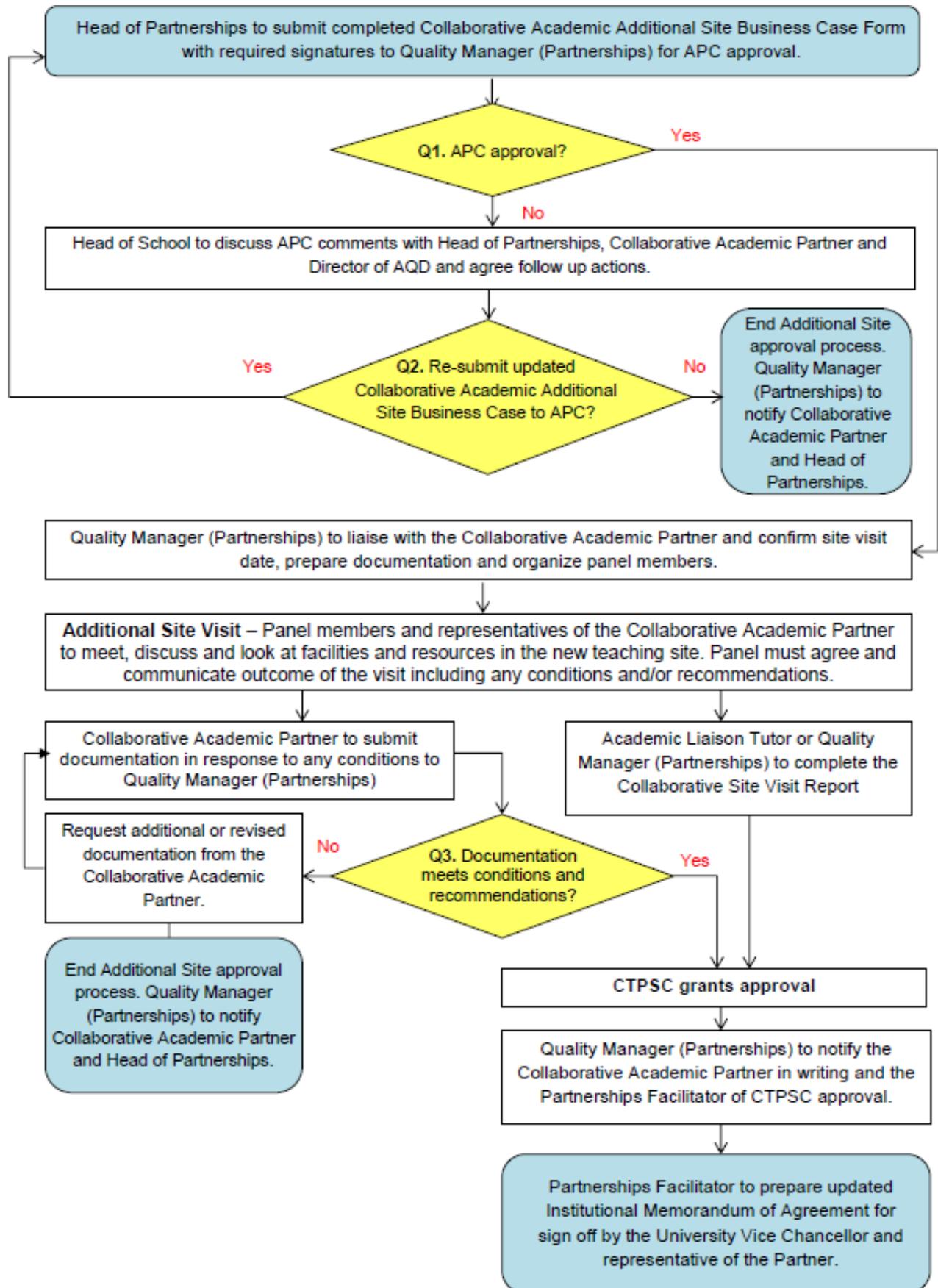


outcome of the site visit to the collaborative academic partner and all relevant staff within the University. Where the site has not been approved, the collaborative academic partner will be given the opportunity to consider the feedback and may be given the opportunity to re-submit the site for approval following the usual process.

4.6. Institutional memorandum of agreement and course level agreements

4.6.1 The Institutional Memorandum of Agreement (IMoA) and any relevant Course Level Agreements (CLA) must be updated to record the approved locations for teaching and will need to be signed by the University's Vice Chancellor and representative of the collaborative academic partner. The Partnerships Facilitator will lead on the re-drafting process, working with the collaborative academic partner and the School. The Partnerships Facilitator and the AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) will liaise closely to ensure that all necessary contracts are in place before delivery commences at the new location. No teaching can take place at the new site until the required contracts are in place.

Approval of new sites or campuses Process Flowchart Diagram





4.7. Modification of courses delivered by collaborative academic partners

- 4.7.2. It is important that all courses retain their currency and reflect updates in curriculum and student feedback. Courses delivered at collaborative academic partners are subject to the same modification process as those delivered by London Met. Further details of the process are in Chapter 7.
- 4.7.3. The Academic Liaison Tutor (ALT) should support the collaborative academic partner in submission of the modification documentation to the university

4.8. Continuous monitoring of courses delivered by collaborative academic partners

- 4.8.1. Courses delivered at collaborative academic partners are subject to the same principles of, and requirement for, continuous monitoring as those delivered by London Met. However, there are some slight amendments in the process to reflect the additional risks inherent in course delivery via a third party and the need for slightly different reporting systems. Further details of the process are on Chapter 3.
- 4.8.2. The Academic Liaison Tutor (ALT) should support the collaborative academic partner in delivery of the continuous monitoring reporting to the university. This will include review and feedback on action plans and reports to be submitted.

4.9. Periodic Review of courses delivered by collaborative academic partners

- 4.9.1. Courses delivered at collaborative academic partners are subject to the same requirement and schedule for periodic review as those delivered by London Met. Further details of the process are in Chapter 4.
- 4.9.2. The Academic Liaison Tutor (ALT) should support the collaborative academic partner in preparing for the periodic review event. This will include review and feedback of the self-evaluation documentation and the updated course materials, including course and module specifications, where relevant.

4.10. Institutional review of an existing collaborative academic partner

- 4.10.1. Introduction
- 4.10.2. Collaborative Academic Partnerships will be reviewed using the process of Institutional Review. Institutional Review focuses on an evaluation of the partnership as a whole, its strategic and operational fit with the University, and on ensuring that overall quality and standards are appropriate. The University is committed to making Institutional Review a consultative, reflective and genuinely collaborative process of engagement with partners.

4.10.3. The main aims of Institutional Review are to:

- i. explore and to provide assurance that the partnership is operating, on the part of both partners, in accordance with the terms of the Institutional Memorandum of Agreement (IMoA) and the Course Level Agreement/s (CLA);
- ii. provide continued assurance to the University that the partner's governance, management and mechanisms for quality assurance remain robust;
- iii. assist the partner in an evaluation of strengths and weaknesses at an institutional level with particular regard to teaching and learning and the strategic management of provision;
- iv. draw on feedback from External Examiners and students to be able to identify potential improvements to the management of the partnership and ultimately the enhancement of the student experience and student outcomes;
- v. reaffirm the collaborative partnership.

4.10.4. Institutional Review is a separate process to periodic review of courses run with collaborative academic partners, although there is some cross-over between the two and the two may be considered as separate parts of one event.

4.11 Timing of an Institutional Review

4.11.1. Institutional Approval is usually given for three years initially and thereafter for five years. In the academic year prior to the expiry of the Institutional Memorandum of Agreement (IMoA), a formal Institutional Review process will be undertaken, organised by the AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) or other nominated member of AQD.

4.11.2. The date for the institutional review will be agreed between AQD and the collaborative academic partner at least six months prior to the event and the partner will be given key deadlines to prepare documentation. Usually the Institutional Review and Course Periodic Review events should be planned together and held consecutively.

4.11.3. The University charges a fixed fee plus costs for the Institutional Review event. The AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) in AQD can provide details of this.

4.11.4. Should serious concerns arise during the period of the IMoA regarding the sustainability of the partnership and/or the academic quality and standards at the partner, the university can require the partner to participate in an exceptional Institutional Review out with the usual schedule. The Director AQD must seek approval for this from CTPSC. The documentation requirement may be amended to reflect particular concerns of the university.

- 4.11.5. An exceptional Institutional Review may also be generated where a partner repeatedly fails to comply with the required quality assurance processes as detailed in the university Quality Manual. The Director AQD must seek approval for this from CTPSC. The documentation requirement may be amended to reflect particular concerns of the university.

4.12 Institutional review event – documentation to be considered

- 4.12.1. For a routine Institutional Review the AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) will ask the collaborative academic partner to refresh or provide comprehensive information to provide context for the panel on the nature, history, and operation of the institution. This will include:

- i. [Self-Evaluation Document \(SED\) \(AQDC028\)](#)
- ii. Governance structure (organogram) and committees
- iii. CVs of Management and senior staff
- iv. Resources Statement – academic and support staff (indicating F/T and P/T) and physical resources
- v. Strategic Plan
- vi. Quality Assurance documents e.g. Quality Manual and all associated policies
- vii. Academic Regulations
- viii. Equality and anti-bribery policies
- ix. Collaborative Annual Monitoring Statements
- x. Partnership Annual Monitoring Statements
- xi. QAA Reports (if applicable)
- xii. Financial information to include: name and address of auditors; last three years of audited accounts; budget for current year; financial forecasts for next three years; insurance policies (due to the sensitive information within these documents, they will only be shared with the AQD Office and the University's Finance Office)

The AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) should usually receive the documentation from the collaborative academic partner at least six weeks prior to the event. The panel should usually receive the collated documentation from the AQD Office four weeks prior to the event. In addition to material provide by the

collaborative academic partner, this will include the [Institutional Review Event Agenda, Panel Briefing Note and membership list \(AQDC009\)](#)

- 4.12.2. AQD will be advised by the University's Finance Office on the ongoing financial standing of the partner institution, to provide assurance that the risk of the partnership falling on account of this is low. This information will not be shared with the Panel.

4.13 Institutional Review Event – Panel Membership

- 4.13.1. The Institutional Review event is conducted by a small panel of University staff (academic Chair from another School, a senior member of the AQD Office and, on occasion, an internal member also without the School). The panel also generally includes an experienced external member with a background in collaborative provision. The Secretary to the Panel is usually the AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) or another appointed member of AQD.
- 4.13.2. The Chair should have significant experience of collaborative academic provision and an ability to critically evaluate institutional capacity to deliver University provision. Other panel members should also be experienced in collaborative provision and quality and standards management. Where appropriate, additional panel members with specialist expertise such as online learning will be drawn from the University.
- 4.13.3. External Advisors on the panel should have broad experience of UK higher education at a senior level and be capable of independent judgement. Impartiality is further safeguarded by ensuring that external advisors have not had any association with the University within the last five years prior to the Institutional Approval event. This would normally exclude former employees who have worked at the University within the last five years. External advisors are required to provide initial feedback on the documentation, participate fully in the event and submit a post-event report to the AQD Office. AQD are responsible for conducting Right to Work checks on all External Advisors and confirming appointment prior to any documentation being sent. For further information on the [Right to Work check](#) process.
- 4.13.4. Guided by the Chair, the panel are asked to review the strengths and weaknesses of the partnership in terms of governance, capacity and delivery systems, its strategic and operational fit with the University, and overall quality and standards. The panel should be able to form a judgement on the continued capacity of the partner to deliver London Met awards to the required academic standards.

4.14 Institutional Review Event – Agenda

- 4.14.1. The AQD Officer will confirm the agenda for the [Institutional Review event, based](#)

[on the template \(AQDC009\)](#). Attendees from the Partner will include senior management and teaching staff. There should be an opportunity for the event panel to meet existing students and, where possible, alumni. A tour of the collaborative academic partner's facilities will always be required.

- 4.14.2. The relevant Head of School and the appointed Academic Liaison Tutor(s) will usually attend the Institutional Review event. The Head of Partnerships may also attend.

4.15 Institutional Review Event – Outcomes

- 4.15.1. At the end of the meeting the Institutional Review panel must recommend one of three outcomes:

- i. recommend re-approval;
- ii. recommend re-approval subject to one or more conditions;
- iii. not recommend re-approval.

The panel may also make commendations and recommendations. If the approval is subject to conditions then a date must be specified for the completion of the conditions.

- 4.15.2. The Secretary to the Panel will produce the outcomes report within five working days of the event. A full Institutional Review event report is subsequently written for the Collaborative Taught Provision Sub-Committee (CTPSC) and will include the post event report from the external advisor(s). This report will detail more fully the reasons for the panel's decision and its assessment of the ability of the partner to continue delivery of London Met awards at the required academic standards. CTPSC will use the full IR report as the basis for its decision on institutional re-approval.
- 4.15.3. The collaborative academic partner is responsible for meeting all conditions set by the panel by the deadline agreed. All documentation to support meeting the conditions should be sent to the Secretary to the Panel. All conditions must be met before the institutional re-approval can be confirmed and contracts renewed.
- 4.15.4. Recommendations by the panel must be addressed alongside the response to the conditions of approval. Recommendations should also be considered in the Partner Continuous Monitoring Statement.
- 4.15.5. Once all documentation has been received, the AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) will liaise with the Chair of the event to review the responses and confirm which conditions have been met. If the partner meets all the set conditions, the Chair will recommend institutional re-approval to the CTPSC. The

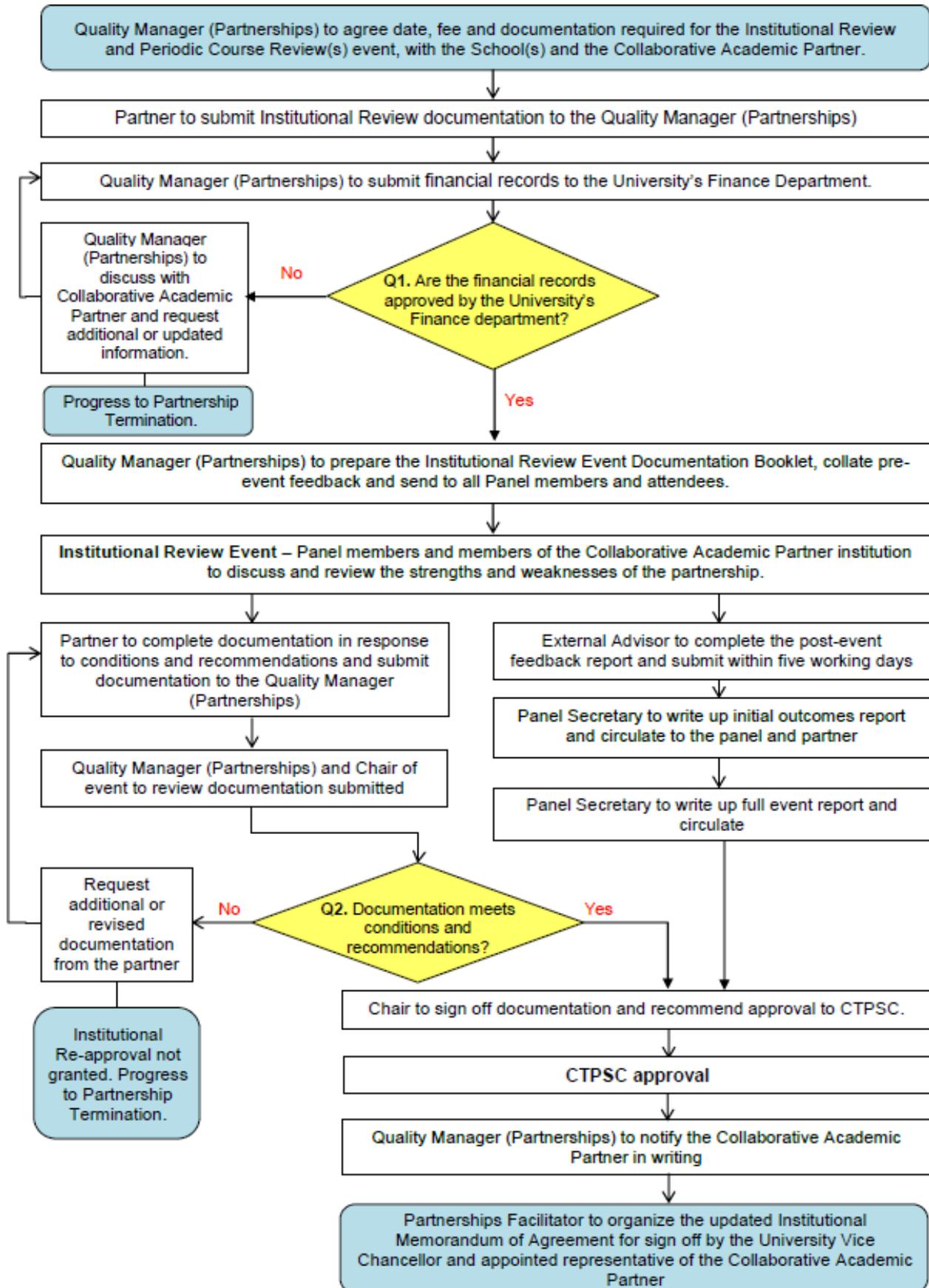
Chair's sign off must be recorded in writing (AQDC016). If part or none of the conditions are met, the AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) will liaise with the Chair of the event and communicate the items that need to be addressed and recommended actions to take. A new deadline date will be agreed between the prospective partner, the Chair of the event and AQD.

- 4.15.6. It is important to note that any delays in meeting conditions can potentially affect the continued delivery of courses. Courses can only run when relevant contracts are in place.
- 4.15.7. The AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) or AQD Officer is responsible for notifying the approved partner of the event outcome in writing and is responsible for notifying relevant colleagues across the University of the outcome.

4.16 Institutional Memorandum of Agreement (IMoA)

- 4.16.1. The Institutional Memorandum of Agreement (IMoA) (AQDC017), sets out the contractual arrangements between the University and a collaborative academic partner. The period for institutional approval detailed in the IMoA is usually three years for the initial approval and thereafter five years.
- 4.16.2. When the Institutional Review process is completed, the Partnerships Facilitator will liaise with the partner and the School(s) regarding the Institutional Memorandum of Agreement to agree drafts and to take this forward to finalisation and sign off. Sign-off must be secured from the University Vice Chancellor and the appointed representative of the new partner.
- 4.16.3. The IMoA needs at least one associated CLA (AQDC022) to be brought in to force.
- 4.16.4. The Partnerships Facilitator and the AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) will liaise closely to ensure that all necessary contracts are in place before delivery commences.

Institutional review process flowchart diagram





5. Process for suspension or closure of courses delivered by collaborative academic partners

- 5.1 London Met aims to deliver courses that meet appropriate threshold standards, provide students with an inclusive and up to date curricula, prepare students for employment, and provide students with a high-quality experience and positive outcomes. Due to market forces and student feedback it may be necessary that course teams suspend course intakes or recommend courses for closure. The process for this at collaborative academic partners is the same as that for on campus provision.
- 5.2 The Academic Liaison Tutor (ALT) should support the collaborative academic partner in providing any documentation to the university for course suspension or closure.

6. Process for termination of collaborative academic partnerships

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1. The University will review the progress and success of its collaborative academic partnerships on an ongoing basis. A decision to terminate a partnership or course may be taken to reflect one of a number of factors including: lack of alignment with the university's strategic direction; poor recruitment; local political, social or economic instability; poor development of academic quality; poor financial return; reputational risk to the university.

6.2 Termination Process

- 6.2.1. The decision to terminate a collaborative academic partnership must be agreed by both the PVC Student Recruitment and Business Development and the PVC Academic Development. The Head of Partnerships should submit the [Partnership Termination Request Form \(AQDC012\)](#) to the AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) for Academic Portfolio Committee (APC) consideration.
- 6.2.2. When a partnership termination has been agreed by APC, the PVC Academic Development will contact the collaborative academic partner to inform them of the decision. The Head of Partnerships and relevant Head(s) of School will agree a termination agreement with the partner in respect of the provision for each School of the University. The Termination Agreement Form (AQDC029) will be drawn up by the Partnerships Facilitator to record the details of the termination agreement/s. The Partnerships Facilitator and the AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) will liaise closely to ensure that the content is appropriate.
- 6.2.3. The termination agreement will reflect the terms of the Institutional Memorandum of Agreement (IMoA) and any relevant Course Level Agreements (CLAs). The termination agreement will include provisions to ensure effective teach-out of any

students registered at the collaborative academic partner, thus enabling the university to discharge its duty to those students. Where a partner works with more than one School there may be more than one termination agreement brought into effect.

- 6.2.4. During the period that the termination agreement/s are in effect the collaborative academic partner may be subject to revised continuous monitoring requirements. The AQD Quality Manager (Partnerships) will work with the relevant ALTs to agree the requirements on a case by case basis, ensuring that these fulfil the university's obligations with regards to quality assurance of all its provision. For further guidance on specific annual monitoring requirements, please refer to Chapter 3 of the Quality Manual.
- 6.2.5. Where a collaborative academic partner has to cease business suddenly, for example due to financial difficulties, the University will consider the partnership to be terminated. The contingency arrangements agreed between the University and the partner, as detailed in the IMoA or CLAs will come into effect. These arrangements will ensure that the university can continue to fulfil its obligations to students registered at the collaborative academic partner.
- 6.2.6. Course closure at any collaborative academic partnership will follow the same course closure process that applies to in-house provision. For further guidance on closing courses, please refer to Chapter 8 of the Quality Manual.

Termination of partnership process flowchart

