**Academic Quality Handbook**

**Appendix 10.1**

**University of Aberdeen**

**COLLABORATIVE PROVISION: DEFINITIONS**

*(see Section 10.2)*

**Accreditation:** The process by which an approved partner institution without its own degree-awarding powers (or which chooses not to exercise them) is given wide authority by the University to exercise powers and responsibilities for academic provision leading to an award of the University.

The partner institution is responsible for:

a. recruitment and selection;
b. the registration and regulation of students (including complaints procedures);
c. programme delivery;
d. the quality of the student learning experience;
e. financial matters.

The University is responsible for:

a. approving the programme and arrangements for assuring and enhancing the quality of the student learning experience, and for monitoring their effectiveness;
b. maintaining the academic standards of awards and, for this reason, students at accredited institutions have access to its appeals procedures.

*Note that the University accredits other institutions only in exceptional circumstances.*

**Articulation:** The process by which cohorts/groups of students are guaranteed entry to a programme of the University as the result of successfully completing prior study at another institution. This may or may not involve exemption from certain parts of the University programme on the basis of the qualification and/or credits from a programme of study undertaken elsewhere.

The partner institution is responsible for:

a. the recruitment and selection of students;
b. the registration and regulation of students (including complaints and appeals procedures);
c. the design of the programme and its delivery;
d. the quality of the student learning experience;
e. the standards of the credit/award;
f. financial matters.

The University is responsible for:

a. ensuring that the output standards set and achieved by students are equivalent to those set and achieved by Aberdeen students taking the University programme to which articulation students progress who are entering the same stage of their studies.

**Distance Programme:** The process by which a programme of the University is delivered and assessed entirely by University staff, with delivery occurring off campus using facilities (eg teaching accommodation, library and IT provision, administrative support) provided either in whole or in part by the partner institution. The University is responsible for all aspects of such provision.
**Franchising** describes the process by which a university (the awarding, or franchising, institution) agrees to authorise the provision of the whole or part of one or more of its own approved programmes by a partner institution. In doing so, the university involved retains overall responsibility for the programme’s content, delivery, assessment and quality assurance and enhancement arrangements.

*Note that the University normally does not approve any request to franchise Aberdeen degree programmes and other awards.*

**Joint Degree:** The process by which the University collaborates with one or more other awarding institutions to jointly set up a degree programme which is recognised and delivered by all the partners and which shares a common set of constituent courses (where appropriate) and regulations.

A Joint Degree leads to a single award from both or all institutions. A single certificate or document attests successful completion of this jointly delivered programme, replacing the separate institutional qualifications.

For Joint Awards, there must be clarity in terms of responsibility for the approval and validation of the programme design, and for the arrangements for delivery; in addition to responsibility for the quality of the student learning experience, the regulations covering monitoring, progression, assessment and examination, the regulations governing students on the programme, including recruitment, selection and registration, and complaints and appeals, and clarity on financial matters.

One of the partner institution(s) may act as the institution of primary registration (Lead Institution) by formal agreement with the other partner institution(s). The Lead Institution will take the lead in establishing the collaborative arrangements and will be responsible for all aspects of programme and student administration, including quality assurance and enhancement.

As the final award is an Aberdeen degree, the University remains responsible for ensuring that output standards are equivalent to those for the same or a similar award for its own programmes. If it does not have a comparable programme of its own, it is responsible for ensuring that the output standards of the award are compatible with similar programmes in the rest of the UK sector.

*Note that the University does not enter into joint award arrangements for individual students.*

Joint Awards can only be established with institutions that have joint-degree-awarding powers.

**Joint Supervision leading to a single award:** The process by which the University collaborates with another awarding institution in jointly supervising a student on a research programme leading to a single award of the University of Aberdeen or of the awarding partner institution.

**Joint Supervision leading to a dual award:** The process by which the University collaborates with another awarding institution in jointly supervising a research student leading to a dual award of the University of Aberdeen and of the partner institution.
For Dual Awards, the regulations, policies and procedures of both institutions must be adhered to throughout, including those for recruitment and selection, monitoring, progression and examination. There must be clarity in terms of periods of registration, location, student status (eg full-time, associate) and fees. Aberdeen requires that for a dual award a student must be registered with and pay full fees to Aberdeen for a minimum period of 12 consecutive months, and be resident in and studying at Aberdeen for a minimum period of 6 consecutive months.

As the final award is an Aberdeen degree, the University remains responsible for ensuring that output standards are equivalent to those for a single award for its own programmes. A decision to recommend the award of the degree by either one of the partner institutions is not binding upon the other.

*Note that the University enters into dual awards only when it is stated explicitly on the degree certificates that the dual award is for a jointly supervised single thesis.*

Dual Awards can only be established with institutions that have degree-awarding powers.

**Serial Agreements:** The process by which the University enters into a collaborative arrangement with a partner organisation which, in turn, uses that arrangement as a basis for establishing collaborations of its own with third parties, but offering the awarding institution’s awards.

*Note that the University normally does not enter into Serial arrangements.*

**Student Exchanges (undergraduate and taught postgraduate):** The process by which students of the University can undertake a period of study at another awarding institution and/or students of another awarding institution can undertake a period of study at the University, often on a specified programme, and gain credit towards their programme or one awarding institution recognises the credit of the other. Exchange agreements can be two-way (Aberdeen sends students out and the partner institution sends students to Aberdeen) or just one way (Aberdeen either receives or sends out students).

Aberdeen enters into Erasmus and various types of non-Erasmus exchanges with selected European and international institutions.

**Validation:** The process by which the University judges that a programme developed and delivered by a partner institution or organisation is of an appropriate quality and standard to lead to an award of the University.

The partner institution is responsible for:

a. the recruitment and selection of students;
b. normally, student registration so that the students are subject to the partner organisation’s regulations in relation to discipline and complaints;
c. the design of the programme;
d. the quality of the student learning experience;
e. financial matters.

The University is responsible for:
a. approving entry standards to the programme, the design of the programme, arrangements for its delivery, and mechanisms for quality assurance and enhancement;
b. ensuring that the output standards of the award are equivalent to those for the same or a similar award for its own programmes. If it does not have a comparable programme of its own, it is responsible for ensuring that the output standards of the award are compatible with similar programmes in the rest of the sector;
c. academic appeals (as the University is the awarding body).

In the particular case of accreditation, the process of validation may be delegated to the partner institution, although the University retains ultimate responsibility for the quality and standards of awards. The University will determine the extent to which it exercises direct control over the quality assurance and enhancement aspects of a programme’s management by a partner institution.

**Hybrids:** Collaborative arrangements may involve combinations of two or more the above. In hybrid agreements, the responsibilities of the partners would still correspond to those for each of the constituent types described above.