

Approach to Global Partnership Development at BU – 2017/18

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This paper is a refreshed version of the September 2016 'Approach to Global Partnerships Development at BU' paper. The paper is intended to serve as a positioning paper to give direction and clarity to future global partnership development, and is not a policy and procedure. The paper identifies the institutional priorities and aims for global partnership development in 2017/18, and discusses the role of partnerships in the Cluster system introduced last year. A refreshed table explaining the criteria, strategic drivers and types of agreement for partnerships in different Clusters is included. Finally, a Global Partnerships Development Framework forms part of the refreshed version to provide clarity for stakeholders across the University in the development of global partnerships at BU.
- 1.2. Global partnerships remain a core part of BU's global engagement ambitions by delivering innovation and societal impact as we take Fusion Global, recognising that no single institution can achieve its goals and mission on its own. Innovative ways of forming partnership networks that are multilateral in nature have been introduced through the Hubs of Practice in ASEAN, China and India. Another approach to multilateral partnership development that is being developed is through establishing partnership alliances or networks in specific themes of societal relevance.

2. External Context

- 2.1. Many developments in the external environment over the last year have continued to affect the national and international Higher Education sectors. Uncertainty over Brexit will continue for a while and the impact on the future of our international academic staff remains unknown despite assurances and this continuing uncertainty has also potentially impacted on the international student body in the UK. It is therefore essential that BU and other UK HEIs continue to be proactive in seeking partnerships of mutual benefit with organisations both in the EU and around the world.
- 2.2. The introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework was considered to be the most significant HE sector legislation in the past 25 years for the UK and is another metric for international partners and students to judge UK universities. Working with our global partners to create impact across our education, research and practice will be essential for the University to maintain and build on its TEF Silver Award. The increased emphasis on impact in the Research Excellence Framework also requires all universities to build even stronger international partnerships to increase citation rates as well as contributing to case studies. To respond to this external environment, the key institutional priority for global partnerships development in 2017/18 is to bring about a shift from our current engagement levels with our global partners to the conversion of some of these relationships to strategic status.
- 2.3. The external environment for international collaboration and student recruitment has also become more competitive as countries such as Australia, Canada, Germany and China, to name but a few, have launched ambitious plans for the internationalization of their higher education sectors.

3. Internal Context

- 3.1. BU currently has around 120 global partnerships that have been established over recent years. Since the launch of the Global Engagement Plan in 2015/16, we have consolidated many of these relationships and developed a long-list for strategic conversion. Through hosting Global Festivals of Learning in 2016 and 2017, eight of our partners have collaborated in the dissemination of BU's research, education and practice in ASEAN, China and India. Building on these foundations, the 2017/18 year will be a transition period for the delivery of targets in the Global Engagement Plan and BU 2018, as well as preparing for BU 2025. For a fuller account on the background to global partnership development at BU, please see appendix A.
- 3.2. Academic Quality have undertaken a review of the University's partner approval process during the 2016/17 academic year. The outcomes of this review were presented to the International and UK Partnerships Committee (IUPC) in October 2017 and have been approved. The review recommends using a partnership taxonomy of three categories (A, B, C) to assess risk during partner approval. The lowest risk activity would be in category A, increasing to category C for the higher risk activities. The taxonomy is designed to offer a flexibility and agility of approach to streamline the overall approval process. The Academic Regulations, Policies and Procedures related to partnerships are available [here](#).

4. Priorities 2017/18

- 4.1. As noted above, the core priority in 2017/18 is to focus on the delivery of our ambition of establishing up to six corporate-led global strategic partnerships to meet the institutional target of PI40 either through the conversion of existing partners or new relationships.
- 4.2. Strategic Partnerships (PI40)
 - 4.2.1. The main priority for global partnership development in 2017/18 is therefore to deliver a clear shift from engaging with partners to generating impact and identifying strategic partners within the current footprint. Crucial to the success of global partnership development therefore is the conversion of a small number of existing or new partnerships to strategic status to establish six corporately-led strategic partnerships by 2018, and in so doing delivering the institutional target of PI40.
 - 4.2.2. A partnership that delivers one or more elements of the following may be considered for strategic status: income, profile, student diversification through international recruitment, and impact through education/research/practice.
 - 4.2.3. One important goal of global partnership development is to generate impact through addressing the global challenges articulated in BU's research/emerging Fusion themes. Strategic global partnership development will be increasingly linked to bidding for external funding to address global challenges and international development goals, and will be prioritised according to themes.
 - 4.2.4. Linked to the alignment to global challenges is the intention to develop global partnership alliances of individual partners to create multilateral networks of partners that collaborate to address these global challenges, and raise the profile of the University and generate greater impact as a result. The nature of global challenges requires groups/networks of partners from a variety of sectors to address them. BU can leverage its expertise through working in collaboration with a range of organisations. In order to maximise

impact more of these links need to be formalised into institutional partners.

4.2.5. Types of potential strategic partners

The table below provides examples of activities for the different types and cluster of partner but is indicative only.

Type	Core Business Activities (Cluster 2 & 3 Partners)	Activities – Strategic (Strategic & Cluster 1 partners)	Suggested Actions for Conversion
Mobility	At least 20 students as a minimum requirement exchanged over 3 years	Cohort; include global outlook as part of mobility; cross-Faculty high volume exchange; links for placements;	Increase range of activities / programmes and scale; increase impact through global outlook on campus
Recruitment	Recognition partner: 30 students recruited over 3 years	Provide consistent nos of students from partners who prioritise BU; engage in other activities such as outbound student mobility, research collaboration	Increase range of activities, scale, scope and subject area.
Research	1-2 individual outputs per year	Bidding for external funding; alliances; interdisciplinarity and cross-faculty; multidimensional global development challenges; monographs; conference proceedings	Increase no of BU and partner researchers from different faculties; multilateral partnerships; increase research bids with partners.
Practice	UK based and KTP; guest lectures at BU; industry visits	Endorsement; networks; overseas internships; CPD/Executive Education	Develop relationships with major industry stakeholders in country
Education	Guest lectures at BU and/or partner	Capacity building for partner; Joint Degrees; Innovation around blended learning / online / mode of delivery	Establish a joint degree; explore different modes of delivery
Profile		High ranking or prestigious partners; High-profile events, including GFOL	

4.2.6. Along with developing strategic partnerships, a key priority for the 2017/18 year is to develop a set of Cluster 1 partners that have a significant reputation and traction in their country. Cluster 1 partners would include a range of organisations, both HEIs and non-HEIs such as Industry/Business, Charities/NGOs, Government Agencies / Policy Makers, Research Institutes etc. Broadening the University’s partnership footprint from mostly HEI partners to a range of non-HEI partners will accelerate our ambitions to take Fusion Global over the 2017/18 transitional year in preparation for attaining institutional global impact as we prepare for BU 2025.

4.2.7. While individual research links are necessary and important, colleagues are requested to consider whether any of their current research links can be converted to university-level partnerships to increase the overall impact of these relationships.

5. **Core Business – Cluster 2 & 3 Partners**

- 5.1. Cluster 2 and 3 partnerships will be considered as core business and while important for the continuing global engagement reach of the University, these partnerships are not considered strategic in of themselves. Cluster 2 partnerships remain focused on mobility (individual student exchange) and student recruitment (progression routes to BU programmes through formal or informal recognition arrangements). Cluster 3 partnerships involve research collaboration between individuals at BU and the partner institution.
- 5.2. These partnerships are still core business in that they support mobility and international student recruitment PIs and allow the development of Cluster 1 and strategic partners. Therefore, the number of these partnerships will not be limited, although colleagues are encouraged to give priority to the development and conversion of these and new partners for Cluster 1 and strategic status. The revised partnership approval process will reflect this prioritisation.

6. The table below lists the clusters of partnerships, along with the associated criteria, drivers, indicative outputs, and information on types of agreement. The table also shows the lead and support department for global partnership development across the University.

Clusters	Criteria	Driver	Indicative Outputs	Potential type of agreement	University Lead(s) for Development	University Support for Development
Strategic – 6 corporately led partnerships	Potential to generate income or profile AND impact; PVC (GE) led	PI40	Income generation & Profile raising Significant impact	Letter of Intent; Memorandum of Agreement (MoA); Recognition Agreement	ADGEs; GE Hub	
Cluster 1	8-10 core partners across all types in each geographic region; Mixture of HEIs, NGOs, charities, government agencies	Hubs of Practice	Income generation and/or Profile raising Hosts of in-country GE events such as Festival of Learning / Destination mobility progs	Memorandum of Agreement (MoA); Recognition Agreement	ADGEs; Global Engagement Hub;	IMSRT
Cluster 2	Mobility partnerships; Recognition partnerships	Mobility: PI7; a globally recognised mobility programme, offering a range of opportunities for students Recognition: Diversify international student recruitment channels & income generation	Mobility: At least 20 students over a 3-year period on exchange; or at least 10-12 students per year on group programmes Recognition: Recruiting at least 30 students over a 3-year period	Student Exchange Agreement; Erasmus Inter-institutional agreement Summer School Agreement; Recognition Agreement	Mobility: GELs/Faculties Recognition: GELs/Faculties/IMSRT	Mobility: Global Engagement Hub Recognition: Global Engagement Hub
Cluster 3	Research collaboration between individuals	International activity that enhances the quality and global impact of BU research.	At least one joint publication / conference per year At least one successful funding application per year Joint workshops / conferences	Memorandum of Agreement (MoA); individual research project agreements.	Faculties	Global Engagement Hub
Unclassified	Pathway partners		Student recruitment	No agreement as not a formal institutional partner	IMSRT	IMSRT

7. Global Partnership Development Framework and Operations

7.1. This section introduces a Global Partnership Development Framework to facilitate the delivery of PI40 of developing 6 corporate-led strategic partnerships by 2018. The Global Partnership Development Framework maps the meetings and committees that drive the operationalisation of the partnerships objective of the 1:6:3 framework of the Global Engagement Plan. The Framework is divided into the following sections, and is presented visually on page 7 below.

7.2. Strategy and Planning

Framework: this groups partnerships into two categories: High Priority and Business-as-Usual (BAU) to ensure clarity on prioritisation. Strategic and Cluster 1 partners are high priority, whereas Clusters 2 and 3 are core business as usual activities.

Planning: The Global Engagement Plan, Operational Plans, and Faculty and Service Delivery Plans provide the strategic direction for types of partnerships and particular partners.

7.3. Inputs

Development & Delivery: Global Partnership development is managed and operationalised through the Global Engagement Team (GET). A Global Partnerships Tracker is a standing item at every GET meeting and shows the progress towards conversion of partnerships to Cluster 1 and strategic status. Data from SciVal will be used to inform selecting institutions with whom to pursue partnerships. The data identifies a wide range of institutions globally with which BU researchers co-publish research. Some institutions may have a large number of BU researchers collaborating with them in different research areas, presenting the opportunity for an institutional partnership.

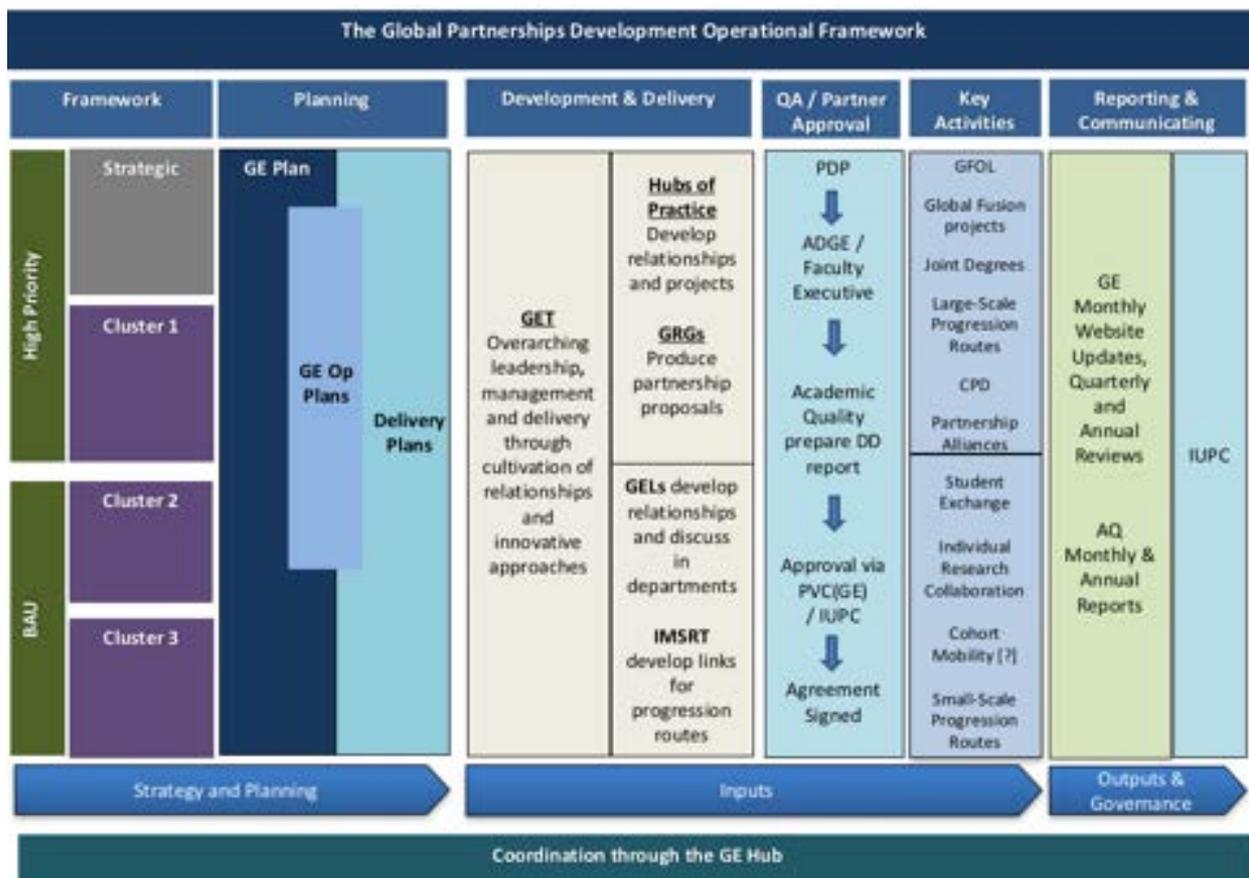
Quality Assurance and Partner Approval: Academic Quality manage the process for partner approval and the signing of institutional partnership agreements.

Key Activities: examples of the main partnership activities are provided. A key activity includes the Global Festivals of Learning which provide a means of dissemination of Global Fusion and vehicle for partnership development using a critical mass of BU staff and students in priority countries and regions. Partnership alliances or networks are another means of accelerating development of strategic partnerships through the impact that can be generated through the multilateral framework of several partners compared to the bilateral, transactional framework of single partner relationships.

7.4. Outputs and Governance

Reporting and Communicating: Reporting mechanisms are listed and the governance by the International and UK Partnerships Committee (IUPC) as a sub-Committee of Senate is noted.

7.5. Global Partnerships Development Operational Framework



8. Conclusion

This paper has presented a refreshed approach for global partnership development in 2017/18, and has included an operational framework to clarify the management of global partnership development at BU. The priority for 2017/18 remains developing and converting up to six strategic, corporate-led partnerships to deliver the institutional target of PI40. The emphasis for partnership work also needs to shift from engagement to generating impact.

Appendix A

Background to partnerships at BU

1. Global Partnerships at BU between 2012 and 2016

- 1.1. This section describes the evolution and governance of the global partnership footprint from the launch of BU2018 in 2012, and up to 2016. This includes the geographical spread of the portfolio, and the changes in governance and operational processes that have occurred to facilitate partnership development while maintaining the appropriate level of quality assurance.

2012-2014

- 1.2. During this period, global partnerships at BU evolved mostly from individual academic contacts that then developed into formal partnerships with a signed agreement.
- 1.3. Some of these relationships have further developed into opportunities for BU students to undertake study exchanges, and for BU to recruit students from partners through progression routes (recognition). Consequently, three distinct models of global partnerships were developed as a result of these interactions: research/staff exchange, student exchange and recognition. However, all of these partnerships were developed as individual relationships and expanded organically rather than in a planned, strategic manner.
- 1.4. In terms of the geographical spread of the global partnerships portfolio, in 2012 this was mostly in Europe and China, and some other partnerships in Asia and South America. For the purposes of governance, from 2012 to 2014, all new partnership development proposals and due diligence reports were submitted to the International and UK Partnerships Committee (IUPC) for scrutiny and approval.
- 1.5. Until 2013, non-Erasmus student exchange partnership proposals and due diligence reports were initially considered by IUPC, then recommended to proceed to Academic Standards Committee (ASC) for deliberation before finally being considered by a separate partner approval panel for final approval. This process was subsequently amended in 2013 so that student exchange partnership proposals could be considered and approved at IUPC without needing to proceed to other committees or panels.
- 1.6. An institutional partnerships database, [globalBU](#), was developed to enable all BU staff to view up to date information related to contracts, approval status and contact details on the University's partnerships, whether current, in development, or archived.

2014-2016

- 1.7. From 2014/15 onwards, following the arrival of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement) in 2014, and the launch of the GE plan in 2015, a commitment was made to refresh the approach of partnership development, and a new partnership approval process was established. From 2014, partnership development proposals for low risk models (research staff exchange, student exchange, and recognition) have been scrutinised and approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement) outside of IUPC. This new process aimed to streamline approval processes for an effective and efficient use of IUPC time for the development and monitoring of a partnership development strategy.

- 1.8. The new partnership approval process for low risk partnership models helped to address the time taken to approve partners. The average time for low risk partnership models to progress from submission of PDP to agreement signature was 37 weeks in 2013/14, down to 36 weeks in 2014/15 and 30 weeks in 2015/16.
- 1.9. The global partnerships footprint has diversified from 2013/14 onwards with new partners being established in North America and Southeast Asia, mostly for research/staff exchange and student exchange. The number of Erasmus partners in Europe has also continued to grow. Most new partnership activity in 2014/15 was driven by the Faculties of Media & Communication and Management, with more activity also from Health and Social Science.
- 1.10. The University governance and operational processes for managing and approving partnerships are often perceived as difficult to navigate and documented in lengthy and complex policies and procedures. In order to close the gap between perception and reality, and to provide a user-friendly and step by step guide to partnership processes, the Academic Partnerships team produced an online toolkit in 2015 on the staff intranet for partnership development and approval.
- 1.11. As part of continuing to improve our practice, we also developed a targeted regional focus for partnership development, the circa 120-150 partners in the global partnership portfolio (current and in development) were audited and mapped according to impact and engagement as well as ability to deliver against University targets. Partners on the RKEO database have also been mapped in order to explore developing these links further as part of the world region partnership portfolios. This mapping is shown in Appendix A.
- 1.12. Finally, the human resource base for leading global engagement across the institution was consolidated through the creation of a matrix team. The Global Engagement Team (GET) was established in 2015 and included the leads for each service area of the global engagement portfolio: recruitment, partnerships, mobility, alumni relations, as well as the Global Engagement Operations team. The GET meets every 6 to 8 weeks, is chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement) and acts as the Global Engagement Executive.
- 1.13. Four Associate Deans (Global Engagement) (ADGEs) joined the GET in 2015/16, providing each Faculty with an academic lead for global engagement, including global partnership development and management.
- 1.14. In 2016, Global Engagement Leads have been appointed in each department in the four faculties. These colleagues support the ADGEs by championing global engagement at the department level, including supporting partnership development.
- 1.15. Also in 2016, the International Partnership Development Manager moved from Academic Partnerships in Academic Services to the Global Engagement Hub, thus separating global partnership development from quality assurance. The team in Academic Services continue to oversee and manage the quality assurance aspects of partnerships, including the partner approval process and signature of partnership agreements.

Partner Cluster System

- 1.16. A partner cluster system has been developed to provide clear direction on the types of partnerships required, from strategic, through Clusters 1, 2 and 3, recognizing the diversity of activity and impact across the portfolio. This section outlines how partnerships are clustered: broadly this is according to partnership model and activity. However the impact/profile generated by an individual partnership could then move it to a different cluster as it is developed. Partnerships are not restricted to an individual cluster purely on the basis of the partnership model or activity. The table below also provides an outline of the clusters into which

partnerships will be grouped going forward. This is intended to provide guidance and direction and will evolve dynamically as we bring more partners and experience of developing and managing them into the institution.

- 1.17. The cluster system does not indicate level of risk per se, but rather the level of impact and type of outputs generated. Each partnership is risk-assessed according to partnership model and on an individual basis during the partner approval process, and is explained in more detail in the [partnerships toolkit](#). Early discussions at the Pre-PDP stage of the approval process can help identify and mitigate the relevant risks.
- 1.18. For partnerships to reach strategic status, they would need to show potential to deliver clearly measurable impact and outputs, generate income and/or student experience diversification/enrichment. As discussed above in paragraph 5.2, a maximum of six strategic partners are being developed on account of the level of resources required.
- 1.19. Cluster 1 partnerships are likely to be institutions with a significant reputation and traction in their country, whether in education, industry, government or the third sector. Areas of expertise where BU is world-leading would initially drive these relationships to increase the reach and profile of the academic footprint of the University.
- 1.20. Cluster 2 mobility partnerships are with institutions similar to BU in academic footprint, and in locations that are desirable and suitable for students to attend mobility programmes, including study exchange. For student exchange partnerships, no restrictions on numbers of students to be exchanged will be made, although funding will need to be considered if high numbers of exchange are planned. Many partners wish to begin with small numbers (e.g. two students per year) to test the exchange, particularly if they face challenges in sending their own students abroad. However it is expected that over a 3-year period student exchange partnerships would exchange at least 20 students as a minimum requirement.
- 1.21. Cluster 2 recognition partnerships could be developed with institutions where the provision in a particular subject area does not reach the same academic level as BU's provision. Typically, these partners are on a similar trajectory of development to BU, but at an earlier stage in their development either as an institution, or in a particular subject area. While acknowledging that such institutions may be younger and with medium to low in-country rankings, it is important that any recognition partner should not constitute a risk to academic reputation.
- 1.22. For Cluster 2 recognition partnerships, a minimum of 5 students enrolling on BU programmes would be the minimum forecast for year 1 for a partnership to be approved. The Partnership Development Proposal (PDP) would need to show the potential for student numbers to rise incrementally so that at least 30 students were recruited over the 3-year period of the recognition agreement. The performance of the partnership over the term of the agreement would be considered when approving the renewal of the agreement.
- 1.23. Cluster 3 individual research partnerships would continue to be developed by academics, concentrating on applying for research funding that would only be available through the formation of the partnership, and generating research outputs as a result of the partnership. Cluster 3 research partnerships would be with institutions of medium to high-ranking in their country in order to generate quality outputs. Partnerships with institutions of high standing in country could move into Cluster 1 once good quality research outputs have been produced.

Hubs of Practice

Global BU launched the concept of 'Hubs of Practice' in 2015, which is built around creating a unique regional, national and global network of partners and collaborators that is connected into business, government, community and academic arenas. Hubs of Practice have been established in three countries/regions where there is well documented economic growth, and expansion of and demand for

higher education: the ASEAN region, China and India. They therefore serve as the priority regions for developing global partnerships, however partnerships should also continue to be developed in other countries/regions to maintain a balanced portfolio and allow the incubation of new countries/regions for future Hubs of Practice.