

## Approach to Global Partnerships Development at BU

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This paper provides an overview of global partnerships at Bournemouth University (BU), including the background to global partnership development, the current footprint, and future priorities. The paper is intended to serve as a positioning paper to give direction to future global partnership development, and is not a policy and procedure.
- 1.2. Global partnerships are at the heart of all global engagement activity, and are therefore a key anchor to delivering a Global BU and form part of the 1:6:3 framework in the Global Engagement (GE) Plan (2015-2018). Consequently, the paper goes on to outline the approach to expand and enrich the current footprint so as to have an optimal balance of quality, quantity, geographical spread and types of activity across one global footprint in line with the commitments made within the GE Plan.

### 2. External Context

- 2.1. Internationalisation is now a key priority in HEIs globally, with a particular emphasis on the mobility of students, staff and researchers as well as increased partnerships and collaborations (Digital Science, 2016, [The Implications of International Research Collaboration for UK Universities](#)). Now that the UK will leave the European Union, we will especially ensure that the University continues to prioritise our stated ambition of 'comprehensive internationalisation' if we are to keep pace within this rapidly-changing and increasingly competitive global HE landscape. Developing innovative partnerships with a range of organisations worldwide is a key part of this journey.
- 2.2. A more detailed analysis of the external context for global engagement and HE was presented in the Annual Global Engagement Update in July 2016, and is available on the intranet.

### 3. Internal context

- 3.1. Relationships and partnerships with other universities and organisations across the world have always been a key feature of academic life. The specialist nature of research means that by definition, academic collaboration happens across the globe and cannot be restricted within national borders.
- 3.2. The University Strategy *BU2018: Creating, Sharing, Inspiring*, launched in 2012, reflects this in C3 *Develop strategic, local, regional, national and International partnerships*. As a derivative of *BU2018*, the [Global Engagement \(GE\) Plan](#) was finalised in July 2015, and formally launched to all staff from October 2015, expands on the purpose, objectives and enablers of *BU 2018* within a 1:6:3 framework with global partnerships as a key anchor.
- 3.3. The GE Plan contains a specific objective on global partnerships as follows: 'We will build a strong portfolio of innovative learning partnerships by becoming a partner of choice'. A new performance indicator, PI40, has been established for measuring progress against attaining six corporate, strategic partnerships by 2018.

3.4. In the sections that follow, we present the background to the development and management of partnerships at BU thus setting the future approach and priorities against its historical context.

#### **4. Global Partnerships at BU between 2012 and 2016**

4.1. 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**

4.2. During this period, global partnerships at BU evolved mostly from individual academic contacts that then developed into formal partnerships with a signed agreement.

4.3. 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.

4.4. 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.

4.5. 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.

4.6. 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**

4.7. 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.

- 4.8. 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.
- 4.9. 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.
- 4.10. 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.
- 4.11. 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.
- 4.12. 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.
- 4.13. 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.
- 4.14. 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.
- 4.15. 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.

**5. Priorities from 2016/17**

- 5.1. Following on from the background to global partnership development provided above, this section outlines our vision and priorities for further developing and improving our approach through to BU 2018. The targeted approach to global partnership development and processes to support this are also articulated.
- 5.2. As described above, to date, three types of global partnerships have been developed according to the drivers in *BU2018* and the Global Engagement (GE) Plan, and are summarised in Table 1 below. To achieve our BU2018 ambitions (specifically C3, C3B) we are developing a targeted approach to partnership development in key regions and through an academic focus. The global impact and traction that Global BU is aiming to deliver will require a small number of key strategic corporately-led partnerships, so we are targeting up to six of this type of partnership (as measured by PI40).

<b>Type of partnership</b>	<b>BU2018 Driver</b>	<b>GE Plan Driver</b>
Research/Staff Exchange	C3, C3B	International activity that enhances the quality and global impact of BU research.
Student Exchange	PI7	A globally recognized mobility programme, offering a range of opportunities for students.
Recognition (Recruitment)	C2B	Develop academic partnerships as a pipeline for on-campus student recruitment.

Table 1: Types of Partnerships

- 5.3. Delivering the global partnership ambitions in BU2018 and its derivative the GE Plan will require the joined up effort of departments and individuals across the Faculties and Professional Services at BU, each playing a key role.
- 5.4. We will continue to support and encourage the development of the full range of relationships with potential partners to progress to formal partnerships through the partner approval process that is led and facilitated by Academic Services and overseen by the International & UK Partnerships Committee (IUPC), whether for research, student exchange, recognition, or other arrangements. In contrast to the fixed number of corporately led strategic partners, the overall number of other partnerships that can be established or continued will not be capped per se, however outputs of the non-strategic partnerships will be monitored to ensure resources and investment are being maximised.
- 5.5. The Partnerships Suite of the [Academic Regulations, Policy & Procedure](#) (ARPP) contains principles for partnership development in 7B Partner Approval and these remain essential for choosing appropriate international partners. In addition to these principles, further guidance is provided below on the types of partners with which we are seeking to collaborate, including a new partner cluster system.

**Partner Cluster System**

- 5.6. 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.

- 5.7. 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.
- 5.8. 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.
- 5.9. 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.
- 5.10. 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.
- 5.11. 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.
- 5.12. 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.

- 5.13. 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**

- 5.14. 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.
- 5.15. Table 2 below lists the clusters of partnerships, along with the associated criteria, drivers, indicative outputs, information on types of agreement, and timescales. The table also shows the lead and support department for global partnership development across the University.
- 5.16. Beneath Table 2 is a high-level process flow (Figure 1) for partnership development and approval. More details on this process can be accessed in the [partnerships toolkit](#) on the staff intranet.

Clusters	Criteria	Driver	Indicative Outputs	Potential type of agreement	Estimated <sup>1</sup> Timescales for Partner Approval and Signature of Agreement	Recommended Action & Priorities (2016-18)
Strategic – 6 corporately led partnerships	Potential to generate income or profile AND impact; PVC (GE) & UET-led	PI40	Income generation & Profile raising  Significant impact	Letter of Intent; Memorandum of Agreement (MoA); Recognition Agreement	For Letter of Intent, 2-4 weeks; For other legal agreements, around 1-2 months for partner approval and signing of agreement (depending on negotiations with partner)	Develop 2-3 relationships to be nurtured and converted to strategic partnerships.
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	Memorandum of Agreement (MoA); Recognition Agreement	Around 1-2 months for partner approval and signing of agreement (depending on negotiations with partner)	Develop new partners
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	Mobility: At least 15 students over a 3-year period on exchange; or at least 10-12 students per year on group programmes  Recognition: Recruiting at least 30	Student Exchange Agreement; Erasmus Inter-institutional agreement Summer School Agreement; Recognition Agreement	For Student Exchange and Summer Schools, around 2-3 months for partner approval and signing of agreement (depending on negotiations with partner). The timescale is longer for outward student mobility activities due to the extra due diligence that is required for partner approval.	Build activities around recognition partnerships;

<sup>1</sup> The timescales indicated here are estimates and may vary according to different factors. The discussions with relevant stakeholders in the Pre-PDP stage of the process flow below in Figure 1 on page 9 are essential and can affect the subsequent timescale of approval.

		channels & income generation	students over a 3-year period		For Recognition, around 3-4 months for partner approval and signing of agreement (depending on negotiations with partner). The timescale is longer for Recognition because the curriculum mapping needs to be approved by Faculty Academic Standards Committee (FASC).	
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.	Around 1-2 months for partner approval and signing of agreement (depending on negotiations with partner).	
Unclassified	Exploratory relationships at an early stage of development	Innovative and creative models of collaboration		No agreement	N/A	

Table 2: Partnership Clusters



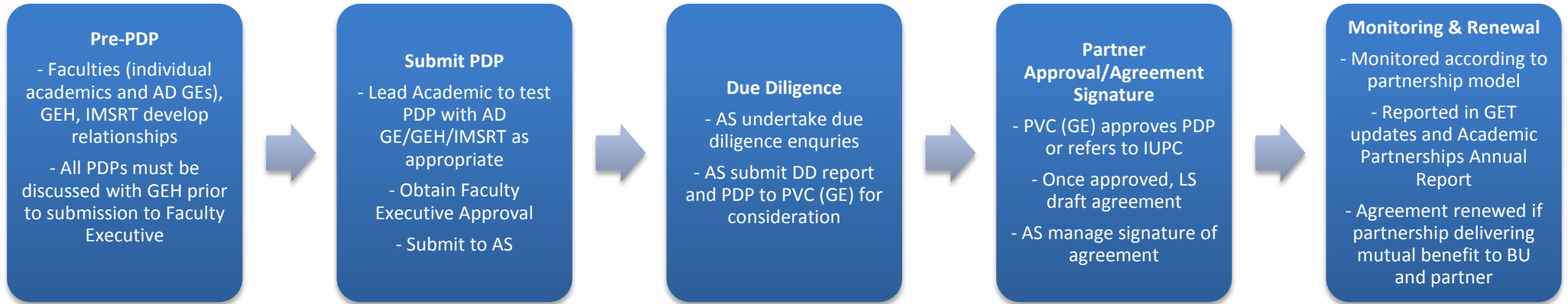


Figure 1: Process flow for partnership development and approval

**Abbreviations:**

- PDP: Partnership Development Proposal
- AD GEs: Associate Deans (Global Engagement)
- GEH: Global Engagement Hub
- IMSRT: International Marketing & Student Recruitment
- AS: Academic Services
- DD: Due Diligence
- PVC (GE): Pro Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement)
- GET: Global Engagement Team

## 6. Conclusion

- 6.1. This paper has provided an overview of global partnership development from the launch of BU2018 up to the present. The types of partnerships and partners that need to be developed to attain targets in *BU2018* and the Global Engagement Plan have been presented. Whilst acknowledging the further work required in improving partnerships development and management processes going forward, the paper has attempted to demystify the current process of partnership development and approval, and provide clarity to the types of partnerships and partner that Faculties can develop to deliver a Global BU.
- 6.2. As stated above, global partnerships are a key anchor of the GE Plan and will drive and connect activity to deliver a Global BU. To achieve this, the institution has committed itself to a cohesive and comprehensive approach to partnerships activity. This approach will always prioritise quality yet will strive to be a more responsive and innovative approach to future partnerships development and management.