



Owner:	Academic Quality
Version number:	8
Effective date:	October 2023
Date of last review:	October 2023
Due for review:	2024/25

This document is part of the Academic Regulations, Policies and Procedures which govern the University's academic provision. Each document has a unique document number to indicate which section of the series it belongs to

7C – Partner Review: Policy and Procedure

1. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

- 1.1 This policy and procedure is intended for Bournemouth University (BU) and Partner staff involved with the process of Partner Review. It provides guidance on the methodology and processes of the Partner Review.
- 1.2 The Partner Review process applies to the following University partnership models: Franchise, Validation, Off-Campus Delivery, Shared Delivery/Programme and Articulation. See *7A - Partnership Models and Definitions: Policy* for partnership model definitions.

2. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 **Senate** to approve new policies or amendments to existing policies relating to the Partner Review.
- 2.2 **Education Committee**:to consider the effectiveness of the arrangements for the Partner Review and approve new and revised procedures by exception.
- 2.3 **University Executive Team (UET)**: to consider high profile, strategic partnerships, to consider partnership proposals and to make recommendations to Education Committee for partnership approval.
- 2.4 **Partners** to provide the required documentation by specified deadlines and to participate in the Partner Review as detailed in this policy and procedure.
- 2.5 **Faculties and Professional Services** to contribute to the documentation and evaluative activity which informs the Partner Review process.
- 2.6 **University staff and University appointed external Partner Review Panel members** to carry out their designated roles in accordance with the University's requirements.

3. ACCESSING OTHER RELEVANT BU DOCUMENTS

- 3.1 All documents can be accessed [here](#)
- 3.2 Other documents with direct relevance to this are:

7A *Partnership Models and Definitions: Policy*
7B *Partnership Approval: Policy and Procedure*
9C *Focused Enhancement Review: Policy and Procedure*

POLICY

4. PRINCIPLES OF PARTNER REVIEW

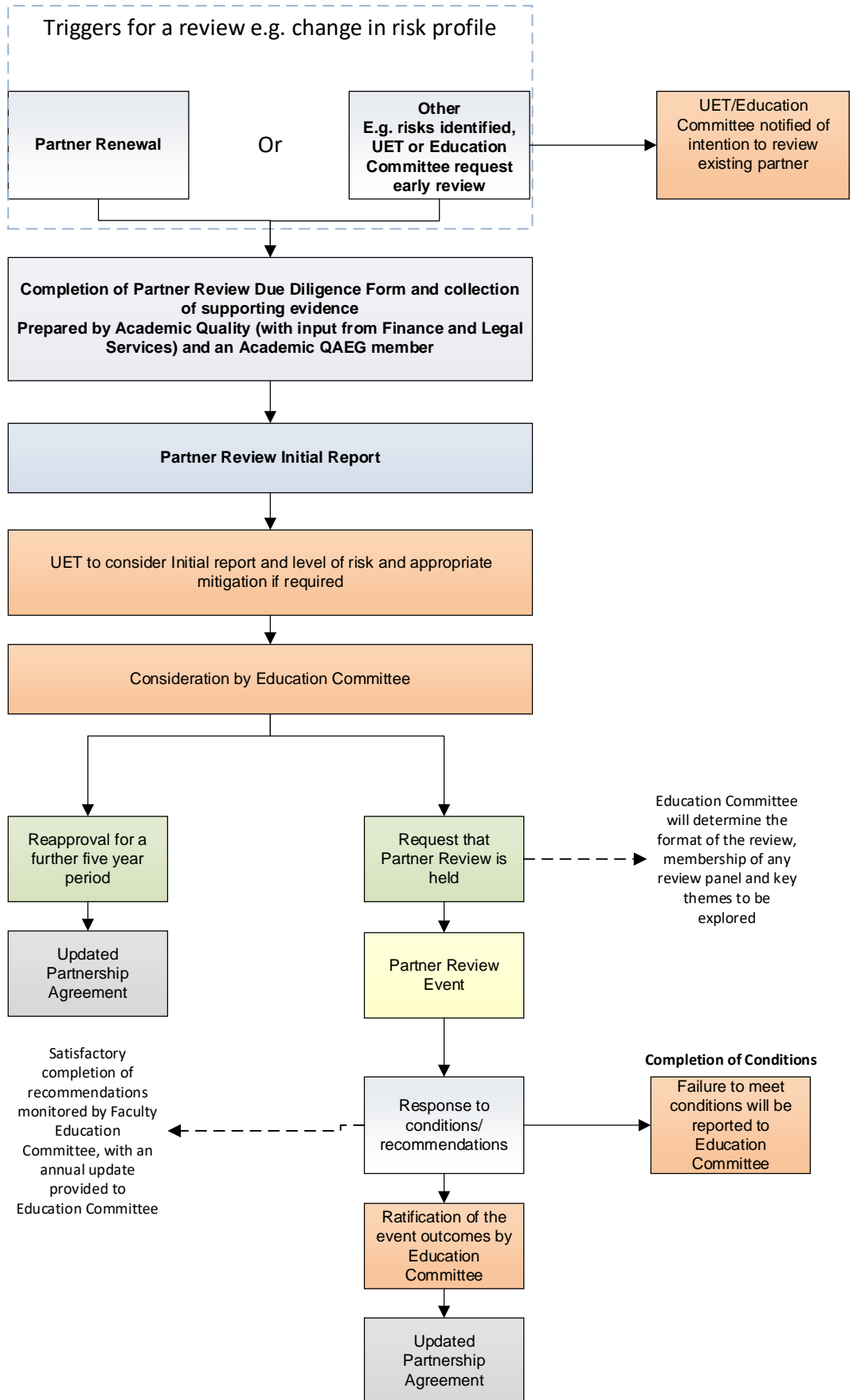
- 4.1 The aim of the Partner Review is to evaluate whether the University can continue to have confidence in the capacity of the Partner to fulfil the requirements of the current Partnership Agreement. The key focus is on the management of HE programmes at a senior level within the Partner although operational details may be explored as a means to evaluate management oversight.
- 4.2 The Partner Review seeks to:
- i. reaffirm the relationship between the University and the Partner, taking into account the evolution of that relationship, institutional developments and changes to the HE landscape;
 - ii. provide an opportunity for both organisations, at institutional level, to reflect on and evaluate the experience of academic collaboration;
 - iii. take into account HE students' views and experiences of the partnership;
 - iv. identify aspects of partnership activity which would benefit from further development and enhancement;
 - v. produce an Action Plan designed to deliver identified development and enhancement outcomes whose implementation is regularly monitored through Faculty Education Committee ;
 - vi. review the appropriateness of the resources available to support a portfolio of programmes delivered at the Partner and to ensure alignment of programmes with current University strategy
- 4.3 Although the Partner Review process is primarily intended to determine whether the University can continue to have confidence in the delivery of programmes at the Partner, the process is also intended to help develop the relationship between the University and its Partners. It should be a two-way process enabling both the University and Partner to raise areas for discussion. This developmental aspect of Partner Review is achieved by:
- i. flexibility of process to enable a review format which is proportionate to the perceived level of risks identified by existing evidence about the management of academic standards and the student learning experience;
 - ii. encouraging Faculties and the Partner to work together in preparing for the Partner Review and developing the action plan;
 - iii. providing the Partner and University staff and students an opportunity for self-evaluation;
 - iv. producing an action plan which is effectively monitored;
 - v. reporting proposals for further development and dissemination of good practice;
 - vi. using existing documentation where possible.

PROCEDURE

5. PROCESS

- 5.1 The diagram below provides an overview of the process:

Process for Partner Review



- 5.2 The Partner Review is normally conducted on a quinquennial basis or more frequently if the University deems it appropriate. Either the University or the Partner may also request a review of the relationship and its operation outside of the usual five-year review cycle. Wherever possible, the Partner Review will precede the production of an updated Partnership Agreement. Where this is currently not happening, this will be monitored and subsequently aligned when possible.
- 5.3 Academic Quality will facilitate initial discussions with the Partner and representatives from the relevant Faculties involved to identify the timetable for the review and the key personnel who will be involved in the preparation of documentation and collection of evidence. Faculty representatives will work with the Partner to complete a Partner Review Due Diligence Form (Appendix 1) along with any accompanying evidence.
- 5.4 Wherever possible, the review process should draw on existing documentation produced as part of routine mechanisms for quality assurance, including QAA review reports. Academic Quality will support the Partner and relevant Faculties and Professional Services in preparing for the Partner Review drawing together the necessary documentation.
- 5.5 Drawing on the Partner Review Due Diligence Form and supporting evidence, Academic Quality will work with an Academic QAEG member, with experience of supporting collaborative provision, to prepare a Partner Review Initial Report (Appendix 2) for submission to UET then Education Committee. The purpose of this report is to enable UET and Education Committee to assess whether the general conditions for the partnership detailed in the partnership agreement, at an institutional level, are still being met and to take note of any changes to circumstances of the partner in the last five years. UET will consider the initial report assessing the level of risk and the mitigation that should be put in place. The report may highlight recommended actions and stipulate how these may be addressed by named stakeholders so that progress against these can help inform Education Committee's consideration and decision making.
- 5.6 Following consideration of the Partner Review Initial Report, Education Committee could:
- (i) confirm that the Partner be re-approved for a further period (normally 5 years);
 - (ii) request that a Partner Review event be held. As part of this decision, Education Committee will determine the format of the review (e.g correspondence review; full panel visit), membership of any review panel and the key themes to be explored as part of the review event.

6. PARTNER REVIEW EVENT

- 6.1 Where Education Committee has determined that a Partner Review event be held, it may specify whether the review event be conducted by correspondence or as a one day visit to the Partner Institution. Procedures for staging a review visit are provided in Appendix 4. Guidance on documentation requirements is provided in Appendix 3.
- 6.2 A Partner Review Panel will be arranged by Academic Quality. The membership of this panel will be informed by the perceived level of risk to academic standards and the key themes identified for exploration. It will typically comprise:
- an academic member of Education Committee, who will serve as Chair;
 - Academic Registrar (or their nominee)
 - an independent internal panel member from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Group (QAEG)
 - a senior member from another UK university with substantial and appropriate experience of academic audits and/or collaborative provision
 - a student representative, normally a Sabbatical Officer from SUBU
 - an Academic Quality representative, who will act as Secretary to the panel.
- 6.3 A written report of the Partner Review meeting, recording the process, debate, identification of good practice, areas for development and outcomes will be compiled by Academic Quality. The report will be circulated to the Panel and Partner for comment on matters of fact and accuracy before submission to Education Committee.
- 6.4 The report will contain a judgment as to whether or not the Partner Review Panel has confidence in the partnership and confirm the date for the next Partner Review (a maximum of five years from the date of the Partner Review Event). Conditions and/or recommendations may be specified by the panel and the timescale and process for ensuring these are satisfactorily met will also be outlined.

- 6.5 The Partner, in association with the relevant Faculties and Professional Services, will be asked to provide a full response to the conditions, normally within four weeks of the meeting, and at least an initial response to the recommendations and areas for enhancement in the form of an Action Plan (see Appendix 4). Academic Quality will send the response to the conditions/recommendations to the Panel. Once all Panel members have confirmed that they are satisfied that the conditions have been satisfactorily met, the action plan will be submitted to Education Committee. Failure to meet conditions will be reported to Education Committee for appropriate measures to be taken.
- 6.6 Recommendations are normally considered over a longer time period and progress on the action plan will be monitored by Faculty Education Committee. Any feedback on the response to recommendations from the panel will be submitted to the Partner and Academic Quality for consideration as part of the ongoing review of the action plan and discussion at Faculty Education Committee. An updated response to recommendations on the action plan will be requested by Academic Quality ahead of Faculty Education Committee meetings until all recommendations have been satisfactorily concluded. A subsequent update on the action plan will be submitted annually to Education Committee by Academic Quality.
- 6.7 Wherever possible, the Partner Review will precede the production of an updated Partnership Agreement. In this case, following confirmation that any conditions have been satisfactorily met, Academic Quality in conjunction with Legal Services will prepare a new Partnership Agreement which will be signed by both the University and the Partner. This is a formal contract and therefore subject to the University's standard approval processes prior to signature by BU and the Partner.

GENERAL

7. REFERENCES

7.1 Internal references and further information

Links to appropriate BU Academic Regulations, Policies and Procedures are referenced throughout this document.

This document has been mapped against the requirements outlined in the [Meeting the equality duty in policy and decision-making at Bournemouth University](#) guidelines.

7.2 External references and further information

The University is responsible for the academic standards of its awards, including all programmes delivered through partnership models. The academic standards of awards must be consistent with [The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree Awarding Bodies](#) and the [UK Quality Code's Advice and Guidance for Partnerships](#).

8. APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 [Partner Review Due Diligence Form](#)
Appendix 2 [Partner Review Initial Report Template](#)
Appendix 3 [Guidance on Partner Review documentation requirements](#)
Appendix 4 [Indicative timeline for staging a Partner Review visit](#)
Appendix 5 [Partner Review Action Plan Template](#)