



**Ollscoil na hÉireann**  
National University of Ireland

# **Quality Assurance for Collaborative and Transnational Provision of Academic Programmes Leading to NUI Qualifications**

**November 2013**

# Ollscoil na hÉireann National University of Ireland

## NA COMH-OLLSCOILEANNA / CONSTITUENT UNIVERSITIES

**An Coláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath / University College Dublin**  
(+353 1) 716 7777 / [www.ucd.ie](http://www.ucd.ie)

**Coláiste na hOllscoile, Corcaigh / University College Cork**  
(+353 21) 490 3000 / 427 6871 / [www.ucc.ie](http://www.ucc.ie)

**Ollscoil na hÉireann, Gaillimh / National University of Ireland, Galway**  
(+353 91) 524 411 / [www.nuigalway.ie](http://www.nuigalway.ie)

**Ollscoil na hÉireann, Má Nuad / National University of Ireland, Maynooth**  
(+353 1) 628 5222 / [www.nuim.ie](http://www.nuim.ie)

## BAILL EILE d'OLLSCOIL NA hÉIREANN / OTHER NUI MEMBER INSTITUTIONS

### NA COLÁISTÍ AITHEANTA / RECOGNISED COLLEGES

**Coláiste Ríoga na Máinleá in Éirinn / Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland**  
(+353 1) 402 2100 / [www.rcsi.ie](http://www.rcsi.ie)

**Coláiste Ósta na Sionna / Shannon College of Hotel Management**  
(+353 61) 712 213 / [www.shannoncollege.com](http://www.shannoncollege.com)

**Institiúid Diagachta agus Fealsúnachta Bhaile an Mhuilinn /  
Milltown Institute of Theology and Philosophy**  
(+353 1) 277 6300 / [www.milltown-institute.ie](http://www.milltown-institute.ie)

**Uversity**  
(+353 1) 687 5999 / [www.uversity.org](http://www.uversity.org)

### COLÁISTÍ CEANGAILTE LEIS NA COMH-OLLSCOILEANNA / COLLEGES LINKED WITH CONSTITUENT UNIVERSITIES

**Coláiste Náisiúnta Ealaíne is Deartha / National College of Art and Design**  
(+353 1) 636 4200 / [www.ncad.ie](http://www.ncad.ie)

**An Foras Riaracháin / Institute of Public Administration**  
(+353 1) 240 3600 / [www.ipa.ie](http://www.ipa.ie)

**Coláiste San Aingeal, Sligeach / St. Angela's College, Sligo**  
(+353 71) 452 433 / [www.stangelas.nuigalway.ie](http://www.stangelas.nuigalway.ie)

# CONTENTS

<b>Chapter</b>		<b>Page</b>
<b>1</b>	Introduction	<b>4</b>
<b>2</b>	Developing Collaborative or Transnational Provision	<b>6</b>
	2.1 Introduction	<b>6</b>
	2.2 Strategic Considerations	<b>6</b>
	2.3 Due Diligence	<b>8</b>
	2.4 Memoranda of Understanding	<b>8</b>
<b>3</b>	Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative or Transnational Programmes	<b>13</b>
<b>Appendix A</b>	Specimen Due Diligence Checklist	<b>16</b>
<b>Appendix B</b>	Specimen Memorandum of Understanding Template for Collaborative Provision	<b>20</b>
<b>Appendix C</b>	Suggested Template for Proposals for New Programmes	<b>23</b>
<b>References</b>		<b>26</b>

# 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Under its Charter, the National University of Ireland (NUI) is empowered to recognise colleges of higher education and award degrees and other qualifications in those colleges. Since its establishment, NUI has fulfilled responsibilities in relation to the standards and quality of its awards in those colleges, seeking to ensure comparability between those qualifications and other qualifications of the National University of Ireland (awarded by NUI in the Constituent Colleges up to 1997 and by the Constituent Universities since then). With the establishment of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), the NUI has endeavoured to ensure consistency between the standards and quality of programmes leading to NUI qualifications and those of the Framework. The enactment of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 under which NUI is a 'designated awarding body' has placed further significant responsibilities on the University in relation to the establishment and publication of its quality assurance procedures. These procedures will be subject to periodic review by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), the Authority established under the Act to oversee the National Framework of Qualifications and the quality assurance of further and higher education and training in Ireland.
- 1.2 NUI is the designated awarding body for all programmes leading to NUI qualifications in the Recognised Colleges. Proposals for these programmes, both major and non-major, are subject to approval by the NUI Senate.
- 1.3 NUI seeks to assure itself that programmes of study which lead to NUI qualifications in the Recognised Colleges are of an appropriate academic standard and that they adhere to University policy and procedures, as appropriate. In particular, the University seeks to ensure that:
- Programmes leading to NUI qualifications are designed in accordance with the University's requirements for programme design as specified in the *NUI Programme Approval Procedures and Regulations*
  - Aims and learning outcomes are clear and coherent and the proposed level of the award is in accordance with national standards

- Curricula, teaching, learning and assessment methods enable students to reach an appropriate standard to achieve the award
- Student support arrangements are appropriate within the Recognised College and sufficient to enable the student to achieve their award aim
- There are sufficient resources (both learning and physical) and staffing in the Recognised College to support the proposed programme aims and objectives
- There are adequate procedures in place in the Recognised College to assure the quality and standards of programmes accredited by NUI, including arrangements to support the student experience and monitor student performance
- Programmes of study take appropriate account of relevant external subject benchmarks and professional requirements and include the involvement of external stakeholders, such as employers and graduates, where appropriate.

1.4 Inter-institutional collaboration and transnational provision are an increasing feature of the higher education environment. Whilst these trends offer significant opportunities, they also carry a range of substantial risks, particularly in terms of quality assurance. NUI is keen to support the development of such arrangements provided that they are strategically appropriate, underpinned by due diligence and reflect robust quality assurance mechanisms.

1.5 The University considers that any collaborative or transnational programmes should be subject to at least the same quality assurance standards as other types of programmes delivered by constituent institutions and that working arrangements should reflect the higher level of risk involved in such activities. NUI expects that any programme leading to an NUI award delivered in a partner or international setting should, in all material respects, be equivalent in quality and standard to (domestic) programmes delivered by the Recognised College.

1.6 In addition, for transnational provision, the University expects that Recognised Colleges, as far as possible, will ensure that the human rights of students, staff and associates are fully respected, regardless of the country in which they are located.

## 2 DEVELOPING COLLABORATIVE AND TRANSNATIONAL PROVISION

### 2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Embarking on a collaborative or transnational initiative is a significant undertaking that presents a unique set of challenges. A rigorous process of research, planning and discussion is essential to minimising the additional risk associated with such ventures. In planning the development of collaborative or transnational provision, Recognised Colleges will wish to give careful consideration to the following strategic, academic, quality assurance, administrative and operational matters.

### 2.2 Strategic Considerations

#### *Suitability of Partner Institution(s)*

2.2.1 It is important that any prospective partner institution is a good strategic fit for the Recognised College. Ideally, prospective partners should have;

- (i) a background in providing similar higher education programmes; or
- (ii) significant experience in dealing with higher education institutions of comparable status.

2.2.2 The educational objectives of proposed partner institutions should be compatible with those of the Recognised College (and, by extension, the University) so as to assure both prospective students and external stakeholders of the quality of the programme proposed.

2.2.3 In assessing the suitability of a proposed partner institution, the Recognised College should explore the following issues:

#### *Educational/Academic:*

- Educational motivations and objectives.
- Experience in operating an educational business.
- Knowledge and experience of the student market.
- Academic quality, reputation and standing.
- Other existing partnerships the institution has developed.

*Business/Financial:*

- Business strategy/business plan.
- Business structure and ownership (e.g. no related businesses or entities which could compromise the programme or cause the collapse of the partnership).
- Financial strength and stability.
- Financial probity.
- Management and administrative capabilities (i.e. good business capability).
- Ability to repatriate funds.

*Legal:*

- Formal legal status.
- Compliance with the laws of the country concerned (especially educational, corporate, tax and criminal laws).
- Existing compliance with legal authorities to operate educational programs.

*Reputational:*

- Reputation with government, regulators and employers; education institutions, parents and students; and (where relevant) with Irish and other international education institutions and authorities.

*Facilities and Infrastructure (a site check is necessary):*

- Location(s) of operation.
- Quality of buildings and facilities, including IT equipment.

2.2.4 In respect of transnational provision, consideration should also be given to the following economic/politico-social considerations:

- Comparability of the legal/regulatory framework with Irish law and practice.
- Stability and openness of the economy, political system and bureaucracy.
- Safety of the social/cultural context for all students enrolled on a NUI approved programme and staff (Irish and native) associated with the partnership.
- Where appropriate, knowledge and experience of 'western' education.

(Extracted from IEAA, *Good Practice In Offshore Delivery: A Guide For Australian Providers*, p. 55)

## Human Rights Considerations

- 2.2.5 In line with the *Human Rights Principles and Code of Conduct for the National University of Ireland and its Member Institutions* (April 2013), before entering into a partnership agreement or establishing an international campus, as part of due diligence, an NUI institution should:
- make itself aware of the human rights situation in the country concerned using authoritative sources of information; and
  - take all appropriate steps to satisfy itself that, on the basis of the information available, the establishment of a partnership or campus is consistent with the University's commitment to the advancement of human rights and academic freedom.

### 2.3 Due Diligence

- 2.3.1 In order to manage risk, safeguard the interests of students, and protect the reputation of the Recognised College (and, by association, the University), in developing collaborative or transnational arrangements for the delivery of NUI-approved programmes, Recognised Colleges are expected to undertake effective due diligence. Appendix 2 of the *IHEQN Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision* (reproduced at Appendix A to this document) provides a specimen checklist outlining a range of pertinent due diligence issues for consideration.
- 2.3.2 In conducting due diligence, information from potential partners should be documented and be capable of independent verification. As part of this process, the University requires that Recognised Colleges undertake site visits to any proposed partner or transnational sites.

### 2.4 Memoranda of Understanding

- 2.4.1 In order to ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities and to safeguard academic standards for NUI awards, the University expects that in all collaborative arrangements, a written and legally binding agreement will be developed between the parties, setting out the objectives of the partnership and the rights and obligations of each party.
- 2.4.2 Recognised Colleges are recommended to take legal advice regarding the content and form of all agreements as they may differ depending on the type of agreement, location etc. Any such agreement should be signed by;

- The Registrar of the Recognised College, following approval by its Governing Authority;
- A person of equivalent position/seniority within any partner institutions; and
- the NUI Registrar, following formal approval of the relevant programme(s) by the NUI Senate.

Such agreements should be time limited (e.g. 5 years) and reviewed periodically.

2.4.3 A suggested template for the development of Memoranda of Understanding is included at Appendix B. Such agreements should be tailored to the needs of the individual parties and the nature of the programme(s) in question. Key issues for consideration are:

### **Governance**

- Management structure, decision-making and reporting.
- Guarantees, indemnity and liability, including the entity (normally the partners) that students can hold legally liable for any deficiencies in the provision of education and training.
- The rights, obligations and legal capacities of all partners.
- The nature of the services to be performed by each partner.
- Legal jurisdiction.
- Arrangements for the collection and maintenance of the information required for any formal reporting requirements between partners and to national authorities, taking cognisance of data protection and freedom of information issues crossing borders.
- Intellectual property rights.
- Arrangements relating to agents<sup>1</sup>.
- Process for addressing disputes in respect of the agreement, including any perceived breaches of the agreement and grievances by students and involved employees.
- Equality/diversity/inclusivity.
- Procedures and arrangements for the suspension or termination of the agreement, e.g. provision, support and financial arrangements in respect of students enrolled on programmes.

---

<sup>1</sup> Third parties, such as brokers, facilitators or recruiters, that act as intermediaries between awarding and providing institutions for establishing transnational educational arrangements. An agent is not usually involved in the provision of educational services.

## **Financial Arrangements**

- Payment of fees and other charges.
- Respective liability for costs, e.g. capital, delivery, administrative costs.

## **Programmes**

### *Governance and Management*

- Programme management structure.
- Awarding body/ies.
- Staff responsibilities (academic and administrative).
- The regulatory framework, including national/professional accreditation recognition and quality assurance requirements.
- Policies and procedures (transfer, progression, plagiarism, attendance, discipline, appeals, complaints etc.).
- Management of student records.

### *Admissions*

- Academic and other entry requirements, including arrangements for the recognition of prior certified or experiential learning. Students are required to meet NUI minimum entry standards, including acceptable standards of proficiency in English.
- Procedures for applications, acceptance, fee payment, registration, etc. The admission of students should be conducted in a fair and equitable manner.

### *Protections for Enrolled Learners (PEL)*

- The legal obligations of each partner in respect of PEL and the arrangements to enable students to continue their studies or to have their fees refunded in the event that a partner institution should decide to discontinue the programme.

### *Curriculum*

- Award standard and programme learning outcomes: referencing alignment with relevant qualifications frameworks e.g. Irish NFQ, ESG or other international equivalents. For transnational provision, curriculum and learning outcomes should be comparable to those of any equivalent programme delivered domestically by the Recognised College. It is recognised that for certain subjects where a syllabus reflects specifically local conditions, e.g. law, it may be necessary or desirable to adapt or replace this to make it appropriate to the transnational setting.

- Programme structure: including detail on the learning environment, modes of learning, and the parties responsible for development and delivery.
- Assessment strategy: the conditions under which an award will be recommended (marks and standards).
  - Assessment requirements in partner/international settings, should mirror those in place for (domestic) students within the Recognised College. Recognised Colleges should be able to demonstrate that:
    - assessment is equivalent to comparable programmes approved by NUI for (domestic) students of the Recognised College;
    - assessment is aligned to the same learning outcomes as assessment of students on comparable (domestic) programmes in the Recognised College; and
    - appropriate learning activities allow for timely and constructive feedback to students.
  - Arrangements should be established and tested to ensure the security and the integrity of the assessment process.
  - Where a programme approved for domestic provision is being extended to an international location, as far as possible, the examination process should be moderated by the same external examiner(s).

#### *Teaching Staff*

- The level of qualification/experience and professional registration/accreditation requirements. Where relevant, consideration should be given to the comparability and equivalence of international academic/teaching qualifications;
- The language of instruction. For transnational provision, it is recommended that Recognised Colleges consider whether the benefits of providing (teaching or assessing) programmes in languages other than English outweigh the associated risks. Where English is the preferred medium, consideration should be given to English language proficiency in international teaching staff and skills in teaching students for whom English is not a first language.

#### *Quality Assurance Arrangements*

- Internal procedures and arrangements for internal programme review.
- Roles and responsibilities in relation to the appointment of independent external examiners and/or provision of external monitoring/input as appropriate.
- Arrangements for student feedback.

### *Graduation Arrangements*

- Provision and content of parchments, provision of gowns, location of ceremonies.

### **Resources**

- The provision of physical facilities and electronic resources, including accommodation, laboratories, library and information systems.
- The provision of student support services and how they will be delivered. It is important that student support and guidance delivered in a partner/international setting is comparable to that provided (domestically) in the Recognised College.

### **Communications**

- Student information. It is important that information given to prospective students and to those registered on a programme of study is appropriate, accurate, consistent and reliable, and of a standard comparable to that provided to (domestic) students of the Recognised College.
- Agreement on the use of logos and procedures for the approval of programme promotional/marketing material, to ensure the provisions of clear and accurate information and appropriate branding.

### **Monitoring and Review**

- The arrangements for monitoring and review of the agreement should be specified and determined with reference to institutional and national quality assurance requirements, the level of risk, proportionality and fitness for purpose.
- Duties and responsibilities of the extern examiner should be clearly detailed and mirror those adopted (domestically) in the Recognised College, while taking into consideration certain duties that may be specific to the partner institution / international context.
- Arrangements should also be agreed for annual, periodic and interim review (where necessary). Where the programme is transnational and also offered domestically by the Recognised College, it may be desirable for the review to encompass the delivery of the programme at all its delivery locations. Alternatively, it may be more appropriate to review all programmes offered by a single partner at the same time.
- In reporting on transnational provision, Recognised Colleges should include regular (at least annual) reports in relation to any human rights issues.

# 3 APPROVAL, MONITORING & REVIEW OF COLLABORATIVE OR TRANSNATIONAL PROGRAMMES

## 3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The NUI's procedures for the approval of new programmes, and amendments to existing programmes, proposed by Recognised Colleges are set out in the *Procedures and Regulations for the Approval of New Programmes and Programmes where there are Major or Minor Changes to the Content and Overall Learning Outcomes* (June 2013) (hereafter 'the Approval Procedures').
- 3.1.2 New collaborative or transnational programmes proposed by Recognised Colleges are considered under the procedures for the approval of new programmes as set out in the Approval Procedures, subject to the additional arrangements outlined below. Proposals to extend programmes previously approved for domestic provision to an international campus are likely to be considered under the procedures for changes to existing programmes; however, this will depend on the extent and nature of any changes to the original programme. Approval arrangements in these circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

## 3.2 Approval of New Programmes

### Documentation

- 3.2.1 Section 2 of the Approval Procedures outlines the documentation that should be submitted to NUI in respect of new programmes:
- (a) The programme proposal (in hard-copy and electronic format) from the relevant School / Faculty in the Recognised College.
  - (b) The full report of the external assessor (where appointed by the Recognised College).
  - (c) The report of the Recognised College addressing any issues raised by the external assessor.
  - (d) Any relevant supporting documentation relating to the programme proposed and the internal programme approval process in the Recognised College.

- 3.2.2 Where a proposed new programme is of a collaborative or transnational nature, there are a number of additional dimensions that the University will seek to consider in determining whether it should be approved. The programme proposal (3.2(a)) submitted by the Recognised College should therefore reflect these additional aspects. A suggested template detailing the areas that should be included in proposals for programmes of a collaborative or transnational nature is included at Appendix C. Where the proposed programme is a collaborative initiative, a proposed Memorandum of Understanding must also be submitted.

### **External Review**

- 3.2.3 The NUI is responsible for ensuring that effective methods for the approval of new programmes are established and maintained to ensure that the standards and quality of proposed new programmes within the University are maintained both nationally and internationally, and are consistent with those in place in the NUI constituent universities. To support this process, the Senate requires that all new programmes leading to NUI qualifications in the Recognised Colleges be subject to external and independent review.
- 3.2.4 The University's approach to the external review of proposed new programmes is dependant on the nature of the proposed award and is outlined in the Approval Procedures. The approval of any new programme is subject to a satisfactory report on the proposal from at least one external assessor.
- 3.2.5 Whether appointed by the Recognised College or the University, the primary role of the external assessor is to act as an independent discipline expert. For proposed collaborative/transnational provision, the assessor is invited to comment on any aspect of the proposal. Where feasible, it is desirable for the assessor to visit the intended delivery site as part of their assessment. Where a site visit is not possible, the University will seek supplementary assurance for any approved programme through its external examiner reporting arrangements.
- 3.2.6 The external assessor is asked to provide a commentary on the proposal, identifying any areas for potential improvement or of concern to which he/she wishes to draw the attention of the Senate. These may include:
- The context/vision/mission of the institution and partner organisations.
  - Entry to the programme: the target market, admissions strategy, English language qualification/standards.
  - The projected student numbers.
  - The provision for teaching and learning.

- The suitability of programme content in the light of the aims and objectives of the programme.
- Whether the proposed programme meets the academic quality and standards of similar programmes offered by other institutions.
- The assessment strategy: the alignment of module and programme learning outcomes with assessment methods and the suitability of the assessment instruments; the arrangements for student progression.
- The proposed resources and teaching space.
- Quality assurance arrangements.
- Staffing/staff development.
- Publicity and marketing.
- The appropriateness and adequacy of student support systems.
- The financial viability of the programme.

3.2.7 The report should include any recommendations for improvement/ further action and conclude with a clear recommendation as to whether or not the arrangement should be approved, for what period of time, and whether or not approval should be subject to conditions. The Recognised College will be expected to respond to any issues raised by an external assessor and approval may be conditional.

### **3.3 Monitoring & Review**

3.3.1 NUI monitors the quality and standards of programmes on an annual basis through the reports submitted to NUI by appointed external examiners. It is also expected that Recognised Colleges benchmark their own quality assurance procedures through the standards and guidelines established by ENQA, which would include a process of self-evaluation, peer review and the development of quality enhancement plans. The Recognised College should advise the University of any issues arising through ongoing monitoring mechanisms.

3.3.2 University approval of all academic programmes is for a period of up to five years. Revalidation of programme approval is subject to receipt by the University of a satisfactory programmatic review. When undertaking such reviews, the Recognised College should give careful consideration to the composition of review teams. Review personnel should not have any involvement in the development and/or delivery of the programme under review. Where a transnational programme is also offered by the Recognised College on its home site, it may be desirable for the review to encompass the delivery of the programme at all its delivery locations.

# APPENDIX A

## Specimen Due Diligence Checklist

(Extracted from Appendix 2 of the IHEQN *Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision*)

An institution may wish to consider the following points regarding potential Partners.

Note: this list is not exhaustive and is intended only as an aide-mémoire e.g. if a merger was proposed, a much more detailed due diligence check should be undertaken, including employment, real estate and similar. As there are many types of collaborative and transnational arrangements (e.g. different partners, location, programmes etc.), an assessment should be made of the conditions that are required to enable the proposed arrangement to succeed. The Due Diligence enquiries should then be tailored to these, to ensure that appropriate and proportionate due diligence checks are made, in consultation with the proposed partner. Accordingly, institutions may wish to adapt their standard Due Diligence procedures to reflect the nature and type of proposal under consideration and the risks it may present.

### 1 General and Academic Due Diligence

- What benefits will derive from the partnership?
- Is there 'in principle' institutional management support (all prospective partners)?
- Is the proposed environment one in which human rights can be respected and the ethical values of your institution upheld?
- Will the proposed environment promote learning?
- Are the proposed education and training facilities appropriate?
- Do the partners have the competence and capacity to fulfil the roles assigned to them in a sustainable way?
- Can the partners have an open intellectual community that values critical reflection and fosters personal and professional development for students and staff?
- Are partner staff appropriately qualified and experienced?
- Does the pedagogic style of the partners incorporate good practice?
- Do the partners have peer relationships with the broader local/regional community of higher education and training?
- Can the partners demonstrate an understanding that higher education and training is a collegial, international endeavour?

- Have the partners described and listed all formal collaborations with other higher education institutions or organisations?
- Do the partners have the human resource capacity (academic, professional, administrative, etc.) to allocate staff on an appropriate basis for the management of the 'branch campus' and/or the provision of the proposed programmes, and will said staff deployment not compromise current provision?
- Will there be receiver-country recognition of awards made?
- Are support services for students capable of being provided on a comparable basis to those available to students at the institution's main location or in Ireland generally?
- As awards made under Ireland's National Framework of Qualifications are intended to promote mutual recognition and confidence in the learning outcomes attained; it is important that other awards or validation offered through the partners are recognised by reputable bodies

## 2a Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Due Diligence (Internal Focus)

- Do the partners have robust quality assurance and quality enhancement policies, procedures and practices? Do the partner institutional strategies, policies and procedures for quality assurance meet for example, European (or relevant country/regional equivalent) standards for internal quality assurance within higher education institutions e.g. Part 1 of *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG) or the Malaysian Qualification Agency guidelines. These may include:
  - Policy and procedures for quality assurance;
  - Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards;
  - Assessment of students;
  - Documented staff appointment procedures with criteria for appointment, promotion, and staff development provision;
  - Learning resources and support;
  - Information systems and data protection; and
  - Public information.
- Do the partners have a culture and practices underpinning access to, progression from and transfer within, higher education and training?
- Do the partners assign credit in a transparent way, for example, consistent with the Bologna process and ECTS credit framework (or equivalent)?

- Is the availability of support services for students comparable to those available to students at the institution's main location in Ireland?
- Has the partner similar Agreements in place and can they confirm that they are currently in order?

## **2b Academic Standards Quality Assurance Due Diligence (External Focus)**

- Are the requirements of the national quality agency or other licensing authorities in the relevant country (and the countries of other partner-institutions, where relevant) acknowledged and provided for?
- Are the partners externally reviewed?
- Are the partners in good standing with any relevant national agencies or is state 'permission' required to engage in the provision envisaged?
- Have procedures through which the requirements of external parties and the requirements of awarding bodies and other partner-institutions been established, so that they can be harmonised on a continuing basis?
- Have matters relating to professional/statutory regulation, or otherwise, been considered?
- Will the proposed programme be recognised in the jurisdiction in which it is proposed to offer it?
- Is any proposed agreement consistent with relevant country/regional practice e.g. OECD/UNESCO Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Education (2005); QQI Guidance; the Malaysian Qualifications Framework; etc.?

## **3 Legal Requirements**

- Does the potential partner have the legal capacity to enter into an Agreement?
- Are the legal requirements in the partner/transnational jurisdiction known and capable of being adhered to – e.g. delegated authority to make awards, compliance with national legislation relating to education or other domains, such as appropriate human resources policies and procedures, company registration etc.?
- Does the jurisdiction where the agreement is to be enacted have agreed, defined arrangements for the settlement of disputes, mediation, and sharing of liabilities?
- Where relevant, do the potential joint awarding partners have the authority to make awards?

- Are there issues relating to Freedom of Information legislation?
- Is Government Agency/Department support/approval required?
- Are there any institutional governance issues?
- Are there statutory reporting requirements?
- Is the proposed form of collaboration recognised?
- Are there any intellectual property issues?

#### **4 Financial and Resource Issues**

- Can the proposed programmes be funded in a secure way and is the partner institution adequately resourced to undertake and complete the programmes proposed?
- Is there clarity on financial matters such as sharing of costs and income, payment of taxation, including the currency/currencies in which fees and payments are to be made and arrangements for handling currency fluctuations?
- Are there appropriate transfer or bonding plans in place to protect students in the event that it is not possible to complete the provision of a programme after it has commenced?
- Are the financial plans based on realistic projections of student numbers and other variables e.g. income stress tested against varying student intake targets?
- Can the physical and electronic infrastructure be provided on a stable basis?
- Is the administrative infrastructure able to provide timely reports/information to regulatory bodies and other stakeholders including other awarding bodies?

# APPENDIX B

## Suggested Memorandum of Understanding Template for Collaborative Provision

Description	Content
<b>Names of Partners and Contact Details</b>	
<b>Objectives and Purpose of the Agreement</b>	
<b>Duration of the Agreement</b>	Including arrangements for; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● monitoring and review; and</li> <li>● suspension and termination of the agreement.</li> </ul>
<b>Legal Jurisdiction</b> (where relevant)	The country in which any legal interpretation or dispute in relation to the agreement shall be sited.
<b>Background of the Parties</b>	Legal status; national accreditation, awarding body; location; overview of provision.
<b>Strategic Context for the Agreement</b>	
<b>Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Management structure.</li> <li>● Decision-making and reporting arrangements.</li> <li>● Guarantees, indemnity and liability.</li> <li>● The rights, obligations and legal capacities of all partners.</li> <li>● The obligations of each party and arrangements in respect of Protection for Enrolled Learners.</li> <li>● The nature of the services to be performed by each partner.</li> <li>● Dispute resolution.</li> <li>● Intellectual property rights.</li> <li>● Arrangements relating to agents.</li> <li>● Equality/diversity/inclusivity.</li> </ul>

<b>Finance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Arrangements for payment of fees and other charges.</li> <li>● Respective liability for costs, e.g. capital, delivery, administrative costs.</li> </ul>
<b>Programme(s)</b>	
<p><i>Governance and Management</i></p> <p><i>Admissions</i></p> <p><i>Curriculum</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Programme management structure.</li> <li>● Awarding body/ies.</li> <li>● Staff responsibilities (academic and administrative).</li> <li>● The regulatory framework, including national/professional accreditation recognition and quality assurance requirements.</li> <li>● Policies and procedures (transfer, progression, plagiarism, attendance, discipline, appeals, complaints etc.).</li> <li>● Management of student records.</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Academic and other entry requirements, including arrangements for the recognition of prior certified or experiential learning.</li> <li>● Procedures for applications, decisions, fee payment, student registration, etc.</li> <li>● Parties responsible for admitting and registering students to programmes/modules.</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Award Standard.</li> <li>● Learning Outcomes (Programme and module).</li> <li>● Programme Structure, including modes of delivery.</li> <li>● Assessment Strategy.</li> </ul>

<i>Staff</i>	
<i>Quality Assurance Arrangements</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Internal procedures and arrangements for internal programme review.</li> <li>● Arrangements for external examiners and review.</li> <li>● Student feedback.</li> </ul>
<i>Graduation Arrangements</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Parchment: content and production.</li> <li>● Gowns</li> <li>● Ceremony Location</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Accommodation, laboratories, library, IT provision.</li> <li>● Student support services.</li> </ul>
<b>Communications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Student Information.</li> <li>● Use of logos.</li> <li>● Approval of marketing material.</li> </ul>

# APPENDIX C

## Suggested Template for Proposals for New Programmes

A proposal for a new collaborative or transnational programme should include, but is not restricted to, the following:

Description	Content
<b>New Programme Overview</b>	
<b>Title of Award / Qualification</b>	e.g. Bachelor of Science.
<b>Title of Programme</b>	e.g. Biomedical Sciences.
<b>School / Department</b>	
<b>Programme Director</b>	
<b>Partner Institutions</b>	Context for partnership and details of proposed partners.
<b>Awarding Body/ies</b>	
<b>External Examiners</b>	Subject area/s required and range of cover (any country-specific requirements?).
<b>Proposed start-date</b>	
<b>Award-type</b>	Major or Non-major (Minor, Special Purpose or Supplemental).
<b>Minor / Exit Awards to be included</b>	
<b>NFQ: Level</b>	
<b>Duration of Programme</b>	Full-time / Part-time delivery.
<b>Total Credits (ECTS) of programme</b>	
<b>Entry requirements</b>	e.g. qualifications or prerequisites needed to undertake the programme (including, where relevant, language requirements), and additional selection criteria, where appropriate.
<b>Outline of programme structure</b>	Diagrammatic overview.
<b>Marks and Standards</b>	These are the examination regulations used in the presentation of results to examination boards; for determining pass/progression within the programme; for decisions on the awarding of the qualification; the honours or other classification awarded; the requirements for completing outstanding requirements, repeat examinations, etc.

<b>Programme Rationale</b>	Subject developments; research links; industrial, commercial and professional links; regional needs; demand for programme; the existence of, and impact for, any similar programmes.
<b>Programme Aim</b>	In general terms, the knowledge and skills set attained by students completing the award.
<b>Programme Content</b>	Outline in general terms of the topics covered.
<b>Programme Learning Outcomes</b>	These are statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate having completed the programme. Statements should focus on what the student will have achieved rather than focussing on the content of what has been taught.
<b>Mode(s) of Delivery / Location(s)</b>	For transnational provision, include commentary on human rights considerations.
<b>Arrangements for the Protection of Enrolled Learners</b>	
<b>Teaching, Learning &amp; Assessment Strategies</b>	<p>Teaching, learning and assessment strategies including the alignment of module and programme learning outcomes with assessment methods. This section should make clear the extent to which a programme includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• continued assessment and the proportion of marks allocated to both continuous assessment and examinations;</li> <li>• Practice-based elements where applicable.</li> </ul>
<b>General Regulations</b>	E.g. Plagiarism, attendance etc.
<b>Progression/Exit Pathways</b>	Where appropriate a general statement should be included to advise students on pathways to further study on completion of their initial award aim and any specific requirements in terms of academic standard, attendance, etc.

	Where <b>exit awards</b> are offered please provide separate Learning Outcomes for each award.
<b>Professional / regulatory bodies and considerations</b>	Where relevant.
<b>Details of each Module offered</b>	<p><u>To include for each module:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Core / optional</li> <li>● Credit volume</li> <li>● NFQ Level</li> <li>● General Aims and Objectives</li> <li>● Module-specific Learning Outcomes</li> <li>● Appropriate learning resources</li> <li>● Assessment criteria</li> </ul>
<b>Resources Statement</b>	<p>Description of the overall resources required for the programme, staffing and physical resources, and the evaluation of the adequacy of resources and ease of access for students.</p> <p><u>To include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teaching staff profiles</li> <li>● Learning resources and student supports</li> <li>● Information Systems</li> <li>● Public Information</li> <li>● Financial viability (including analysis of varying student enrolments).</li> </ul>
<b>Programme Management and Evaluation</b>	Management structure; (where relevant) relationship to other departmental, school or Faculty structures; methods of programme evaluation; student input to evaluation.
<b>General memorandum of understanding (MOU) in relation to academic cooperation between a Recognised College and other relevant partner institution(s) (where applicable)</b>	To be completed in the case of programmes offered jointly with one or more other partners.

## References and Useful Links

UNESCO (2005), *Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education*, (Paris: France), <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/27/51/35779480.pdf>, [Accessed 29 October 2013].

International Education Association of Australia (2008), *Good practice in offshore delivery: A guide for Australian providers*, (Canberra: DEWR, Australia), [https://aei.gov.au/About-AEI/Offshore-Support/Documents/TNE Good Practice Guide FINAL.PDF](https://aei.gov.au/About-AEI/Offshore-Support/Documents/TNE_Good_Practice_Guide_FINAL.PDF), [Accessed 29 October 2013].

QAA (2010), *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education, Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning) – Amplified version* <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/Code-of-practice-section-2.aspx>, [Accessed 29 October 2013].

NUI (April 2013), *Human Rights Principles and Code of Conduct for the National University of Ireland and its Member Institutions*, <http://www.nui.ie/news/docs/2013/HumanRights.pdf>, [Accessed 29 October 2013].

Irish Higher Education Quality Network (May 2013), *Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision*, [http://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/IHEQN Guidelines Collaborative Provision FINAL 21May13.pdf](http://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/IHEQN_Guidelines_Collaborative_Provision_FINAL_21May13.pdf), [Accessed 29 October 2013].

NUI (June 2013), *Procedures and Regulations for the Approval of New Programmes and Programmes where there are Major or Minor Changes to the Content and Overall Learning Outcomes*, <http://www.nui.ie/about/policy.asp>, [Accessed 29 October 2013].



