

# Quality Assurance of Joint & Dual Awards

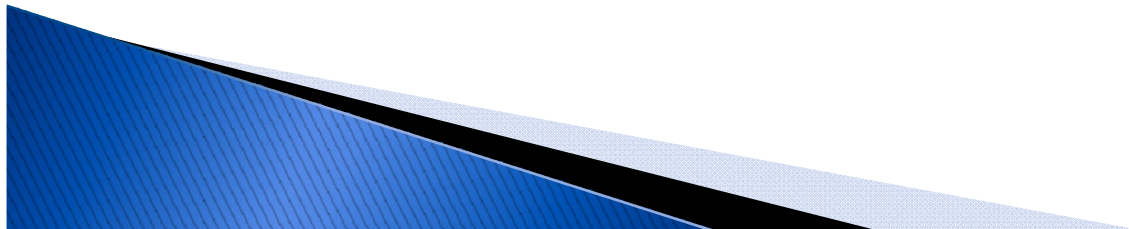
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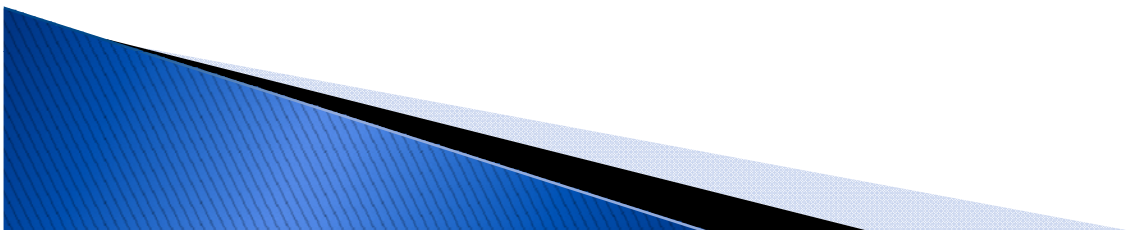
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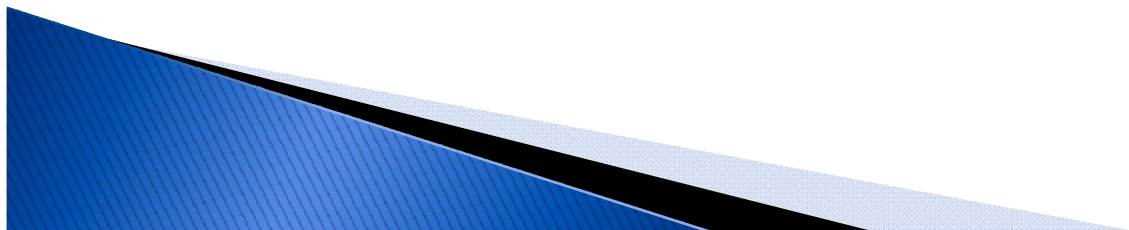
# Introduction

- Reminder – what are dual and joint awards, and why offer them?
- Concerns arising from their approval and delivery, with a focus on QA matters
- QAA views on dual and joint awards
- How HEIs are addressing the concerns
- Relevant publications



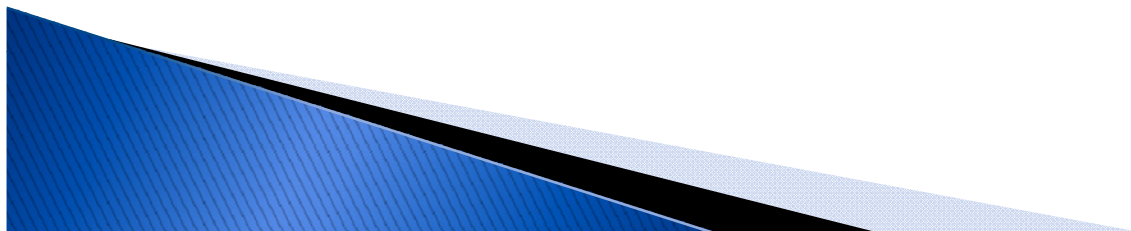
# Definitions

- **Joint award** - two (or more) Degree-awarding institutions collaborate to teach a programme, and the student may study in one or more of them. The student receives one award and one certificate, which carries the crests/logos of all participating universities.
- **Dual award** - two (or more) Degree-awarding institutions collaborate to teach a programme, and the student may study in one or more of them. The student receives typically two awards and two certificates, issued by the individual awarding institutions.



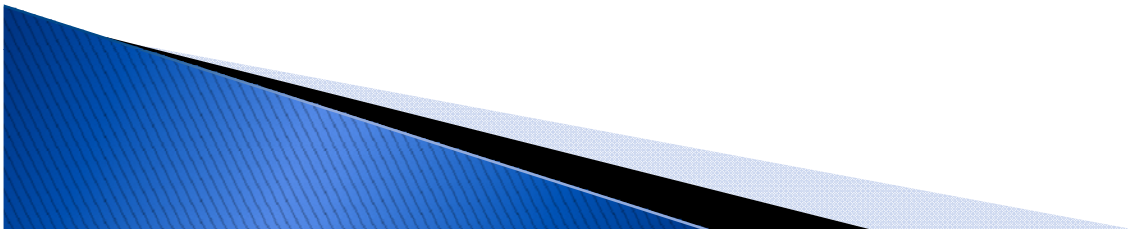
# Why Joint and Dual Awards?

- Mobility opportunities for students
- Enhancement of the international experience of students & staff
- Employability of graduates
- Ticks certain strategic (internationalisation/international engagement) boxes
- Use of complementary resources and academic expertise
- Successive Bologna Communiqués have emphasised the need to enhance the European dimension of HE, by increasing the number of joint degrees across Europe




# Bologna

The **Bologna Declaration** (1999) called for the “*promotion of the necessary European dimensions in HE, particularly with regards to curricular development, inter-institutional co-operation, mobility schemes & integrated programmes of study, training & research*”



# Bologna

**Berlin Ministerial Communiqué (2003):** “.....initiatives have been taken by HEIs in various European countries to pool academic resources & cultural traditions in order to promote the development of integrated study programmes & joint degrees at 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> level. Moreover, they stress the necessity of ensuring a substantial period of study abroad in joint degree programmes as well as proper provision for linguistic diversity & language learning, so that students may achieve their full potential for European identity, citizenship & employability. Ministers agree to engage at the national level to remove legal obstacles to the establishment & recognition of such degrees & to actively support the development & adequate quality assurance of integrated curricula leading to joint degrees”

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# Scale of Joint & Dual Awards

## Results of a UK HE Europe Unit survey (2007)


([http://www.europeunit.ac.uk/sites/europe\\_unit2/resources/E-07-07.pdf](http://www.europeunit.ac.uk/sites/europe_unit2/resources/E-07-07.pdf))

73% of UK respondents (92 HEIs) had the power to award joint degrees or dual degrees. Of those:

Of those able to award joint degrees:

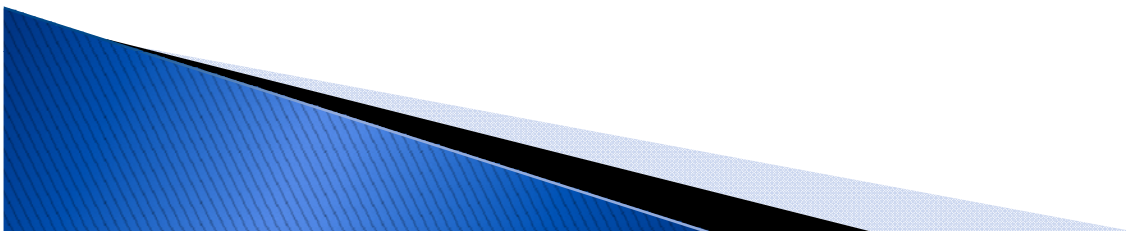
- 73% do so with a UK HEI;
- 70% with an institution in another Bologna country;
- 61% with an institution outside European HE Area.

Of those awarding dual degrees:

- 54% do so with a UK HEI;
  - 64% with an institution in another Bologna country;
  - 52% with an institution outside the European HE Area.
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# Why not Joint/Dual Awards?

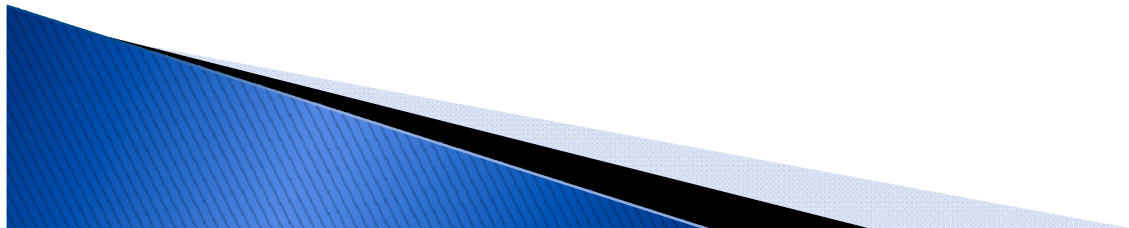
- Governance and legal issues
- Management of academic standards and quality
- Equivalence of regulations
- Financial viability



# University of Westminster

At its May 2006 QAA Collaborative Provision Audit, the **University of Westminster** received a limited confidence judgement for academic standards, as a result of the following essential recommendation:

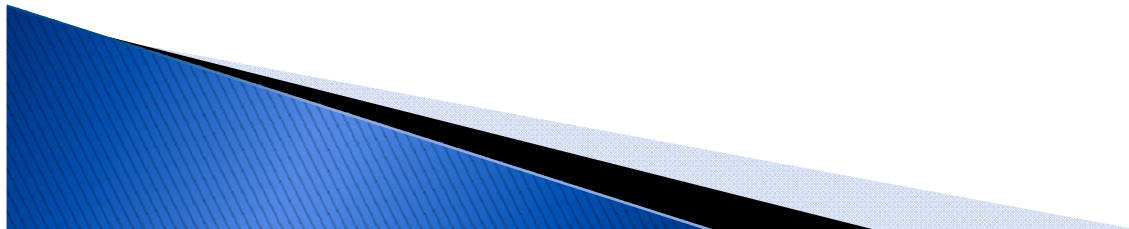
*The team considers it essential for the University to: assure the standards of all its awards in collaborative provision, with particular reference to external examiners' oversight of dual award programmes and ..... (49).*



# London Business School

At its June 2008 QAA Institutional Audit, **London Business School** received a limited confidence for academic standards, as a result of the following essential recommendation:

*In particular, the team considers it essential for the School to: devise and implement a means of ensuring independent oversight of all credit derived from summative assessment within collaborative provision which contributes to an award  
(42)*



# University of Bradford

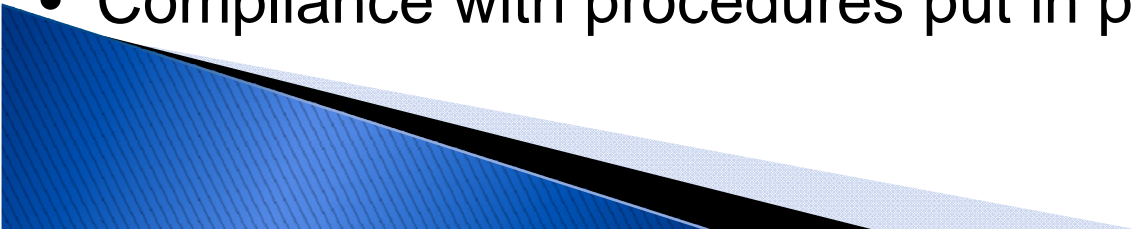
At its April 2010 Collaborative Provision Audit, **University of Bradford** received a limited confidence judgement for standards and quality, due to the following essential recommendations but also a the number of advisable recommendations:

*The team considers it essential that the University review its approach to the management of dual awards, including the process for approval, to ensure that they meet the requirements of the FHEQ and that certificates issued by the University for dual awards state explicitly and unambiguously the programme of study which the student has completed*

*Recommendations for action that is advisable:  
ensure that the academic standards of joint degrees meet the University's own expectations and those of the FHEQ*



# Summary of QA issues

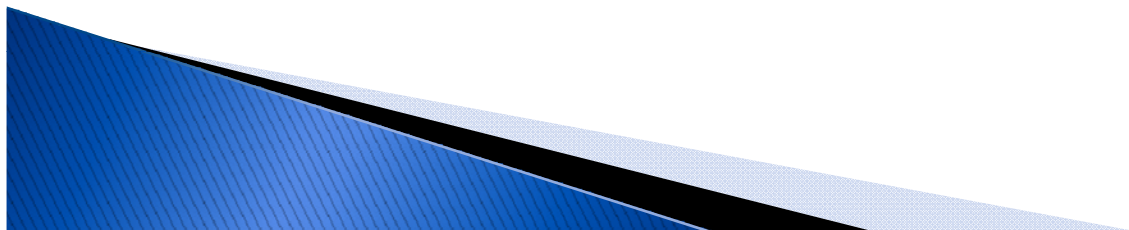
- Approving of partners, and programme regulations;
  - Approving the standard of the partner's curriculum, in particular:
    - that approval processes are in place;
    - that it meets FHEQ;
    - externality;
  - Assuring the standard of assessment at partners, in particular:
    - the extent to which internal examiners are involved in the assessment process at partners;
    - the extent to which external examiners are involved in the assessment process at partners;
    - the (in)ability to compare standards;
  - Compliance with procedures put in place to manage standards
- 

# QAA CoP 2 - Approval

**Precept A9: An AI should undertake, with due diligence, an investigation to satisfy itself about the good standing of a prospective partner, and their capacity to fulfil their role. The investigation should include its legal status and its capacity in law to work with the AI.**

Joint degrees need to be awarded in accordance with national legal frameworks of all AIs involved.

Draw on a range of performance indicators to assess the academic & public standing of a prospective partner.

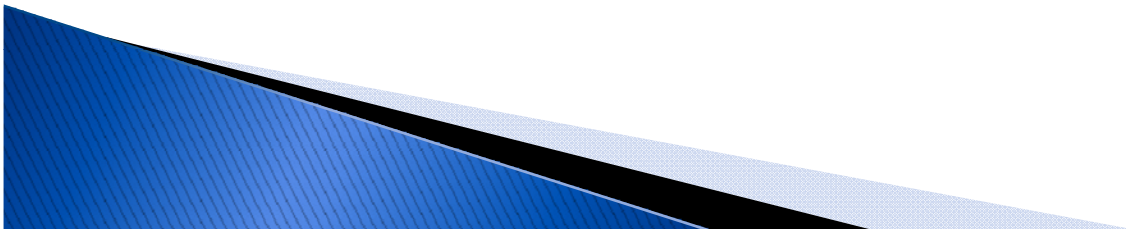


# QAA CoP 2 - Standards

***Precept A1: The awarding institution (AI) is responsible for the academic standards of all awards granted in its name.***

The AI is responsible for ensuring that its standards are maintained when making an award with partners. The collective responsibility for a joint award does not remove the AI's responsibility to ensure that its standards are safeguarded.

The AI is responsible for securing the standards of elements of programmes (modules) delivered in its name by whomever they are delivered.



# QAA CoP 2 - Standards

***Precept A2: Academic standards of collaborative awards should meet the Academic Infrastructure expectations.***

Academic standards need to satisfy the expectations of FHEQ and the partner's national expectations.

With an award offered by different partners with different curricula, the AI should ensure equivalence of standards of the different programmes.

Credits should be awarded through a process consistent with the AI's policies on the assignment of credit level & volume.



# QAA CoP 2 - Regulations

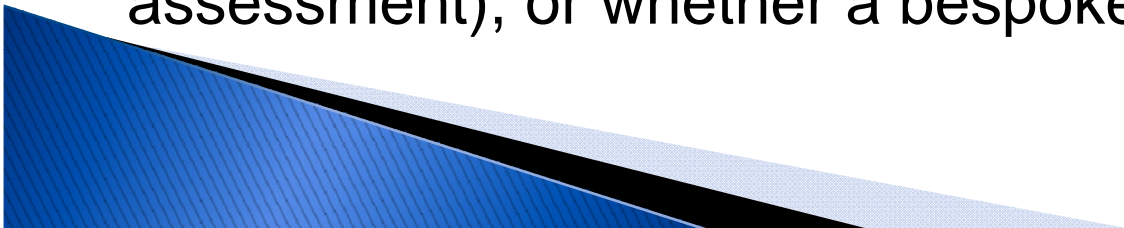
**Precept A13: A partner should be legally able to provide a dual or joint award, & the standard of the award should meet the AI's expectations, irrespective of partners' expectations.**

## Dual awards:

- Responsibility for awards and academic standards remains with the AI and cannot be shared with partners.
- Avoid doubling the credit value (ie credit accumulation/transfer)

## Joint awards:

- Consider the regulatory framework for a joint award (delivery & assessment), or whether a bespoke framework is needed.



# QAA CoP 2 - Assessment

**Precept A19: AI is responsible for ensuring that assessment outcomes meet the specified academic level of the award in *FHEQ, in the context of relevant subject benchmark statement(s)*.**

A shared understanding of the assessment responsibilities must be reached for each partner vis-à-vis maintaining oversight of the academic standards of components of the programme for which they are responsible.

Als who are participating consortium partners must ensure that they are involved in any assessment (or its oversight) which leads to their award, irrespective of whether or not a student has attended the AI. Arrangements should be recorded in MoAs.



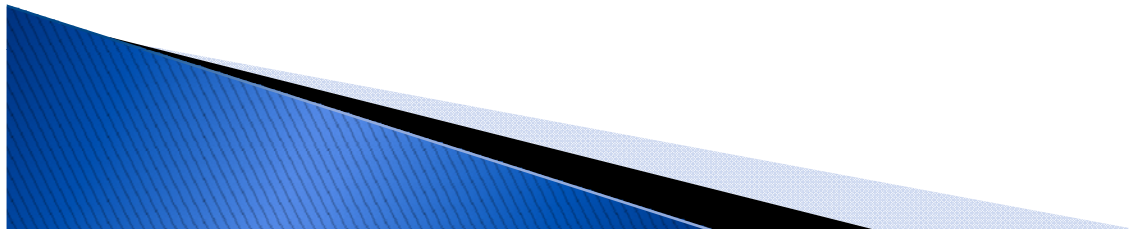
# QAA CoP 2 - External

**Precept A21: External examining procedures should be consistent with the AI's normal practices.**

For joint awards, AIs need to consider what external examining arrangements are appropriate to satisfy the requirements and expectations of all the partners involved and in order to secure the academic standards of their awards.

**Precept A22: The AI must retain ultimate responsibility for the appointment and functions of external examiners.**

For joint awards, AIs should consider the desirability/feasibility of joint appointments or whether dual appointments are appropriate

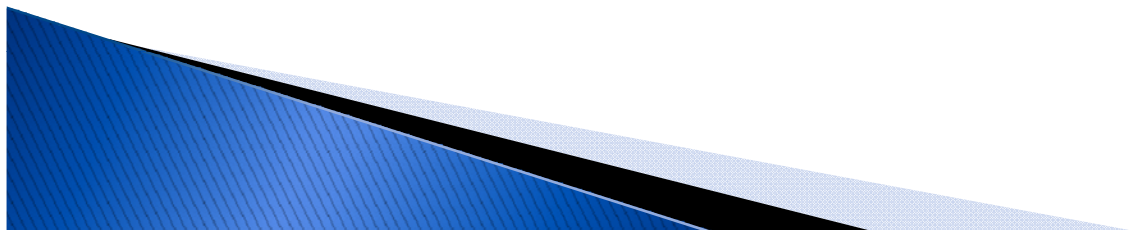


# QAA CoP 2 - Certificates

**Precept A24: An AI should ensure that it has sole authority for awarding certificates/transcripts relating to programmes of study delivered through collaborative arrangements;**

For dual awards, the certificate and/or transcript, Diploma Supplement or HEAR should clarify whether the programme also leads to awards of other partner institutions involved.

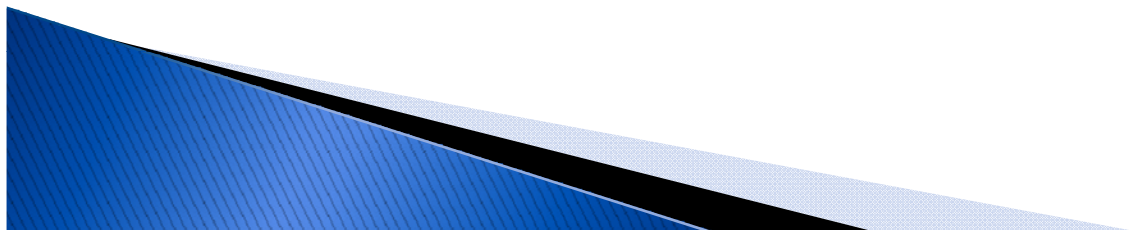
For joint awards, a (single) certificate lists the names of all AIs.



## QAA CoP 2 - Information


**Precept A26: Information available to prospective and registered students should include information about the appropriate channels for concerns, complaints and appeals, making clear the channels for contacting the AI directly.**

Partners should consider how appeals or complaints will be dealt with jointly and how it is administered (e.g. identifying one institution to take responsibility). Students need to be clear about the procedure to be followed and which institution(s) should initially be approached in order to lodge a complaint or appeal.



# QAA Additional Feedback

The following questions should be considered:

- Are arrangements consistent with the academic infrastructure?
  - How does due diligence judge the 'standing' of partners?
  - How do you assess partner regulations for equivalence?
  - How is programme modification by a partner dealt with?
  - Is the level of the other award assessed in relation to FHEQ?
  - What if an external examiner felt a partner's assessment task or student work was not at an appropriate level?
  - What are the transcript arrangements for the award?
  - Complaints or appeals - whose processes do they use?
  - Are student rights and responsibilities the same?
  - Are students clear about how marks are used for awards?
- 

# UH programmes: IBSA/TABSA

UH has recently validated two dual awards in association with non-UK Universities:

- BA Hons International Management, with the Transatlantic Business School Alliance (TABSA). All 7 members are long-established HEIs, with internationally-recognised professional accreditation (WQUIS, EPAS, AACSB). A 'matched' curriculum is delivered. Students obtain 2 degrees after study for 2 years (180 credits) at one HEI then 2 years (180 credits) at another.
- MSc Global Business with the International Business School Alliance (IBSA). The programme at all 5 partners runs for 1 year, in English. Students study core subjects at one partner in the 1<sup>st</sup> trimester then transfer to another for the 2<sup>nd</sup> trimester, followed by the dissertation (jointly supervised) in the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

# UH programmes: EU2P

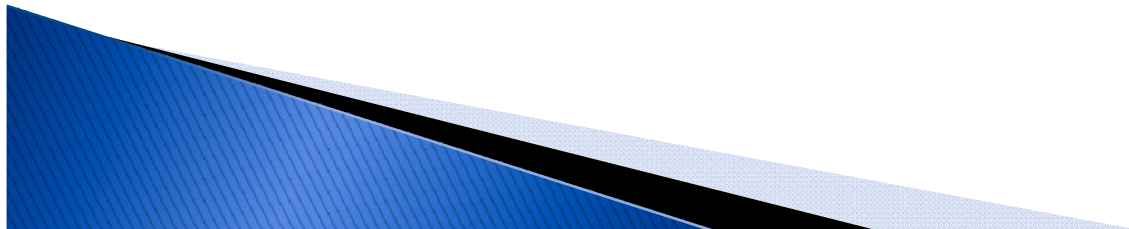
## EU2P: MSc in Pharmacovigilance & Pharmacoepidemiology

- The School of Life Sciences has developed a joint award for September 2011 start.
  - An EU- and European pharmaceutical industry-funded MSc, made jointly with University Bordeaux 2 (France), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain), Erasmus University Rotterdam (Netherlands), Karolinska Institute (Sweden), University of Utrecht (Netherlands) and University of Verona (Italy)).
  - Programme is distance-learning e-based . UH will deliver some core and optional modules on the programme.
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# Partner approval

What should the partner approval criteria be?

- Legally empowered in their country to make their own awards at the academic level of the intended joint/dual award;
- Has the legal and regulatory ability to grant joint awards;
- Be established (how old?) HE Institutions, recognised in the discipline;
- Have professional recognition in the discipline concerned – this may be in the form of professional body accreditation (such as AMBA/EQUIS/EPAS accreditation of MBAs) or significant employer support for the partner to deliver the award;
- In the case of joint award, be from the European HE Area?



# Partner approval

## Due diligence criteria?

- Individual partner approval visits, conducted by the Faculty?
- Identify partner national expectations & equivalence to FHEQ;
- Review partner's academic regs & equivalence to own regs (primarily (i) programme approval, monitoring & review and (ii) assessment processes & Examination Boards);
- Explain the needs of UK HE quality assurance systems, and the partner's willingness to adopt (eg. external examining)
- Define a grade equivalency between yourselves & the partner;
- Establish their professional accreditations in the discipline;
- Agree protocols for dealing with student complaints & appeals;
- Identify practices for programme management, incorporating the student voice and assuring the quality of resources.

*The outcome should allow you to confirm that the partner can meet the relevant expectations of the UK Academic Infrastructure*

# Academic Regulations

- Dual awards: each partner uses their own regs for Awards Boards, each partner uses their own regs for the modules they deliver (hence the need for Grade Equivalency);
- Joint awards: Default to your own regulations wherever possible! If not, hybrid regulations will need to be developed.
- Hybrid regulations need to take into account:
  - Assessment (marking, grading, grade equivalencies, awards, Exam Boards, external examining, assessment offences, extenuating circumstances, appeals & complaints, etc.)
  - Annual monitoring and periodic review expectations
- Regulations must take into account QAA CoP (collaborative provision, assessment, external examining, appeals & complaints, etc.)

# Ongoing Quality Assurance

- Should ongoing QA processes for elements delivered at the partner be based upon trust in their ability to manage academic standards? (evidenced by the partner approval process)
- A 'link tutor' should annually visit each partner hosting students;
- For dual awards, exemption from academic regulations may be required, to allow credit (above the APL limit) at the partner to contribute to the credit requirements for the award;
- Where grade equivalency between home & partner is agreed, they need to be annually reviewed to revalidate them;
- Should students be required to assemble a portfolio of all of their assessed work, for review by the external examiner?
- A programme annual monitoring report should be prepared, as per normal requirements (+)

# Ongoing Quality Assurance

## External Examiners

- Should a Programme external examiner be appointed for all dual and joint awards? (usually, yes)
- Should Module external examiners be appointed for modules delivered by the partner? (not usually)
- If not, should Programme external examiners:
  - review samples of assessments at all partners?
  - review samples of marked student work at all partners?
  - comment on grade equivalency?
  - if they considered that assessments or marked student work were not of a suitable standard, what action should be taken? (any action would require negotiation with the partner)

# Useful resources

QAA CoP Section 2: Collaborative Provision and FDL (October 2010)  
(<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/section2/collab2010.pdf>)

QAA's colloquia on joint degrees  
(<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/international/jointdegrees/>)

European Universities Association (EUA) Joint Masters Project  
(<http://www.eua.be/eua-work-and-policy-area/building-the-european-higher-education-area-bologna-process/joint-degrees>)

EUA Quality Assurance in Joint Masters Programmes  
(<http://www.eua.be/eua-work-and-policy-area/quality-assurance/qa-of-joint-masters.aspx>)

