Partnerships and Programmes Review and Development Policy (PPRDP)

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Linked policies/ documents:	Risk Management Policy Risk Register Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy

	Corporate Social Responsibility Policy
External reference	Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) British Council (BC) Pearson (Edexcel)
	UK Quality Code UKSCQA/02 [May 2018] Expectations for Standards, S3 *Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.* Expectations for Quality, Q2 *The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses*
Audience:	BoG, Senior management

1 Contents

1 Introduction

Oxford Business College is committed to being entrepreneurial and proactively pursuing opportunities for expanding the College's offerings. The Partnership and Programme Review and Development Policy (PPRDP) outlines our approach to establishing and fostering new partnerships and/or programmes of study, ensuring alignment with our strategic plan, developments in the Higher Education (HE) Sector, regional and national labour market needs, and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ).

The policy is closely connected to the Risk Management Framework, which encompasses the Risk Management Policy and the Risk Register. These documents address the risks related to the expansion of the College's provision through partnership development.

New partnerships and programmes undergo a thorough assessment for quality, scalability, and appropriateness. This is achieved through due diligence and validation processes carried out by both the College and its respective partners, ensuring the highest standards are met and maintained throughout the collaboration.

2 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the Partnership and Programme Review and Development Policy (PPRDP) and its objectives, which are focused on ensuring that any new partnership or academic program is thoroughly assessed for academic suitability and viability. The policy describes the implementation process, policy framework, and core practices for maintaining quality and standards in higher education. It also details the procedure for developing new programs and partnerships, identifying necessary changes to existing programs, and the approval process for these changes. Overall, the policy serves as a guide for the Partnership and Programme Review and Development Committee (PPRDC), Strategic Planning and Advisory Committee (SPAC) and the Academic Board (AcB) to ensure that the college's strategic goals, teaching, and assessment strategy are aligned with the development of new partnerships and programs.

3 Scope

- Establishing a clear framework for identifying, assessing, and developing new partnerships

and programmes of study, ensuring alignment with the strategic plan, developments in the HE sector, regional and national labour market needs.

- Outlining the procedures and processes for evaluating new partnership and programme opportunities, including due diligence procedures carried out by the College.

- Describing the roles and responsibilities of various committees and stakeholders, such as the Partnership and Programme Review and Development Committee (PPRDC) and the Academic Board (AcB), in overseeing and approving new partnerships and programmes.

- Detailing the risk management approach in relation to partnership development, including the identification, assessment, and mitigation of potential risks associated with new partnerships and programmes.

- Providing guidelines for maintaining and enhancing quality assurance and academic standards in the development and delivery of new partnerships and programmes.

- Addressing the ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement of established partnerships and programmes to ensure their continued success, scalability, and alignment with the College's strategic objectives.

4 Aim and Objectives

The aim of the Partnership and Programme Review and Development Policy (PPRDP) is to identify a method with procedures for ensuring that any new partnership or programme is vetted for academic and strategic suitability and viability.

To this end, the PPRD policy has the following objectives:

- To provide the Partnership and Programme Review and Development Committee (PPRDC) and the Academic Board (AcB) and the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee (SPAC) with guidance on how to evaluate new partnerships and programmes under consideration so they are in line with the College's strategic plan and its learning, teaching and assessment strategy.

- To ensure that the College scrutinises all new partnerships and programmes according to agreed criteria.

- To ensure that the College continues to monitor and review existing partnerships and programmes in terms of meeting their objectives and making recommendations to the AcB

for the approval of any alterations, amendment or additions to existing partnerships and/or programmes.

- To coordinate the decision-making processes of the PPRDC which reports to the AcB, with the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee (SPAC) that reports to the Senior Management Team (SMT) and, thereby, ensure that academic and business needs of the College are evaluated before the Board of Governors (BoG) give their approval.

- To ensure that before any new partnership or programme is introduced at the College that the needs of current and future students are prioritised.

5 Implementation of the PPRD Policy and Procedures

The PPRD Policy and Procedures are carried out by the Partnership and Programme Review and Development Committee, which reports to the Academic Board and (AcB) and the Strategic Planning and Advisory Committee (SPAC) which reports to the Senior Management Team (SMT). The Terms of reference for these two committees (PPRDC & SPAC) should be read in conjunction with this policy.

6 Framework Levels and Descriptors

A key priority of the Partnership and Programme Review and Development Policy (PPRDP) is to ensure that the curriculum design of all academic programmes at the College are fully aligned with the levels and qualification descriptors of the FHEQ. This assurance is provided by the Partnership and Programme Review and Development Committee (PPRDC), which recommends for approval any new academic programme, or changes to existing programmes of study.   Apart from the College's own level 3 Foundation and Pearson level 4 HNC and level 5 HND courses, all courses offered at the College are undergraduate degree courses (level 4 to level 6) and postgraduate degree courses (level 7) validated by university partners, with integrated foundation at level 3. Through these partnerships, the College is able to ensure that all undergraduate and postgraduate courses offered at the College are fully aligned with the FHEQ levels and qualification descriptors, including the five core characteristics of level 6 as stipulated in Annex D outcome classification descriptions as follows:

- knowledge and understanding
- cognitive skills

- practical skills
- transferable skills
- professional competences, where relevant.

7 Expectations for Standards and Quality: Core Practices

The various activities that fall within the scope of the Partnership and Programme Review and Development Policy (PPRDP) are designed to ensure that all the core practices of the UK Quality Code (UKSQA) are met, including the Expectation for Standards and Expectations for Quality as detailed below:

7.1 Expectations for Standards

- Through the Partnership and Programme Review and Development Committee (PPRDC) and the Enhancement Committee, both of which report to the Academic Board (AcB), the College is able to ensure that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the levels and qualification descriptors in the Framework for Higher Education (FHEQ).

- Through the PPRDC and Enhancement Committee, the College is also able to ensure that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.

- The Academic Board (AcB) receives reports from the PPRDC which allows it to ensure that effective quality assurance arrangements are in place at all times when the College works in partnership with other organisations. Through the delegated powers of the AcB, the PPRDC is responsible for making sure that these arrangements are aligned with the requirements of validating bodies or organisations that the College is partnered with, and that the standards of the awards are credible and secure, irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.

- In order to make effective use of external expertise, the PPRDC has a permanent member who

is an external advisor with academic expertise. The Board of Governors (BoG) and the Audit and Risk Committee also have non-executive members with relevant expertise. The College is committed to the commissioning of external consultants and/or accreditation bodies such as the British Accreditation Council to carry out annual internal audits, with assessment and classification processes that ensure the College is in line with the core practices of the UK Quality Code.

7.2 Expectations for Quality

- The Partnership and Programme Review and Development Committee (PPRDC) and the Quality Enhancement Committee (QEC), which report to the Academic Board (AcB), ensure that the College designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.

- The PPRDC is responsible for ensuring that the College has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.

- The PPRDC and the SPAC are both responsible for ensuring that that the College has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience as part of the approval process.

- The PPRDC is able to ensure that effective quality assurance arrangements are in place when the College works in partnership with other organisations. The PPRDC is responsible for making sure that these arrangements are aligned with the requirements of validating bodies and/or organisations that the College is partnered with, and that the standards of the awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.

8 Programme and Partnership Development

Any programme development at the College must be justified through specific needs analysis of new programmes, or changes to existing programmes. Based upon this needs analysis, the College is able to decide whether to establish a new partnership.

8.1 Needs Analysis for New Programmes

The PPRDC draws from the following sources of information when researching the need for any new partnership or programme at the College:

- Through marketing and analysis of applicant profiles from student admissions and marketing, the College is able to identify student demographics and student choice of programme. This information is used to identify appropriate locations and programmes/courses that prospective students from our target segments are from.

- The College aligns its aims in terms of student recruitment and partnership development with the priorities of local enterprise strategies.

- The College establishes new partnerships and programmes that align with our sustainable development goals as noted in the College's Corporate Social Responsibility Policy.

- Analysis of student and staff feedback on existing programmes ensures that the College is able to identify what future programmes would benefit communities.

- Suggestions from stakeholders may also enable the College to identify a need for a new programme.

- Consultation with employers to identify employability competencies by local businesses

- Analysis of global markets in the development of provision.

8.2 Identifying Changes to Existing Programmes

Whether any changes for existing programmes are required or not, they are informed by the findings in the Annual Monitoring Review (AMR), which is the culmination of the annual review cycle, and periodic reviews from partners which include the following:

- Consultations

- Module Reviews

- Student Surveys

- Achievement Rates

- Student Graduate Outcomes

- External Audits

- Risk Analysis

- Competitor Analysis

- Local Labour Market Needs (LEPs)

- Responding to External Environmental Changes (e.g., the Pandemic)

8.3 Approach to Partnership Development

Partnerships are assessed by the governing body of the College (BoG) according to key criteria before the prospective partner is approached. The Senior Management Team are encouraged to network and actively search for partnerships that would be beneficial to the College. They should not be hindered by bureaucracy, nor should it be a barrier to securing a successful outcome. However, in this regard the Senior Management Team are expected to have undertaken some preliminary research before initiating a new partnership, with further details found in 9.5.

9 Approval Procedures

The College has procedures for approving new programmes and new partnerships and for making any changes to existing programmes on a case by case basis. Checks that support the academic case for a new programme or partnership, or changes to existing programmes are carried out by the Partnerships and Programmes Review and Development Committee (PPRDC). Checks that support the business case for a new programme or partnership, or changes to existing programmes are carried out by the Strategic Planning and Advisory Committee (SPAC). When carrying our check for due diligence the following process flows are used.

9.1 Approval Flow Chart

Identify need for a new program, partnership, or changes to existing programs:

- Needs analysis for new programs

- Identifying changes to existing programs

- Approach to partnership development

Partnership and Programme Review and Development Committee (PPRDC) actions:

- Ensure alignment with FHEQ levels and qualification descriptors

- Ensure core practices of the UK Quality Code are met

- Complete appropriate due diligence checklist; new academic programs, changes to existing programs

- Recommend or reject approval of new programs, partnerships, or changes to existing programs

Strategic Planning and Advisory Committee (SPAC) actions:

- Carry out checks supporting the business case for new programs or partnerships.

- Complete due diligence checklist for new partnerships.

- SPAC approves new programs, partnerships, or changes to existing programs based on business case and due diligence.

Academic Board (AcB) actions:

- Receive recommendations for actions from PPRDC for consideration.

- Ensure effective quality assurance and oversight has been completed.

- AcB approves new academic programs, partnerships, or changes to existing programs based on PPRDC recommendations.

Senior Management Team (SMT) actions:

- Receive recommendations for actions from SPAC.

- Ensure effective quality assurance and oversight has been completed.

- Ensure effective resource planning has been completed.

- Make approval or rejection of new programmes or changes to existing programmes.

Final Approval Board of Governors (BoG) actions:

- Receive reports from the AcB, SPAC and SMT for oversight and organisational approval.

New Programme Approved

9.2 PPRDC Section A Approval Flow: Academic Criteria New Programme

9.2.1 Approval criteria:

- Alignment with the College's Strategic Plan.

- Compliance with FHEQ levels and qualification descriptors.

- Adherence to the UK Quality Code's core practices.

- Fit with the College's academic strengths and curriculum expertise.

- Feasibility according to the College's LTA Strategy.

- Currency in terms of graduate employment outcomes.

- Inclusion of key employability competencies in design and content.

- Appeal to target demographic.

- Student consultation and feedback on the new academic program.

9.2.2 Initial proposal and review:

- Develop a proposal for the new academic program that addresses all approval criteria.

- Submit the proposal to relevant stakeholders for an initial review and feedback.

9.2.3 Stakeholder review and feedback:

- Request feedback from stakeholders, including academic staff, administrators, and student representatives.

- Incorporate stakeholder feedback and make necessary revisions to the proposal.

9.2.4 Compliance and feasibility check:

- Verify that the revised proposal meets all compliance requirements, such as FHEQ levels and UK Quality Code core practices.

- Assess the feasibility of delivering the program according to the College's LTA Strategy.

9.2.5 External review (if applicable):

- If required by the College or relevant regulations, submit the proposal for an external review to ensure quality and compliance.

9.2.6 Final proposal submission:

- Submit the final proposal to the College's Academic Board or other relevant decision-making body for approval.

9.2.7 Approval and implementation:

- If the proposal is approved, develop a detailed academic implementation plan, including timelines and resource allocation.

- Communicate the approval and implementation plan to all relevant parties, such as academic staff, administrators, and students.

9.2.8 Monitoring and evaluation:

- Monitor the program's progress and success according to the College KPI's.

- Evaluate the program periodically to ensure it continues to meet the approval criteria and make any necessary adjustments.

9.3 PPRDC Section B Approval Flow: Making Changes to Programmes

9.3.1 Example Reasons for Programme Change:

- Recommendations for changes to the programme from students or staff.

- Changes recommended by internal or external reviews or committees.

- The methods of assessment of the programme are accessible to all students.

- There are factors that require changes to the mode of delivery.

- To update the content or context of the programme.

- There is opportunity for flexibility of delivery or assessment method.

9.3.2 Initial proposal and review:

- Develop a proposal that details the changes and reasons for changes to the academic program.

- Submit the proposal to relevant stakeholders for an initial review and feedback.

9.3.3 Stakeholder review and feedback:

- Request feedback from stakeholders, including academic staff, administrators, and student representatives.

- Incorporate stakeholder feedback and make necessary revisions to the proposal.

- Strategy.

9.3.4 Final proposal submission:

- Submit the final proposal to the College's Academic Board or other relevant decision-making body for approval.

9.4   SPAC Section A Approval Flow: Business Case

9.4.1 Approval criteria:

- Market demand of the program.

- Gap in the market based on competitor analysis.

- Resource Infrastructure and equipment feasibility.

- Staffing requirements and availability.

- Partnership requirements (existing or new).

- Campus requirements (current or new).

- Potential for new pathways.

- Recognised accreditations offered by the program.

9.4.2 Initial proposal and review:

- Develop a proposal for the new partnership program that addresses all approval

criteria and builds a business operational case.

9.4.3 Market and competitor analysis:

- Conduct a thorough market and competitor analysis to identify gaps and opportunities for the proposed program.

9.4.4 Resource and infrastructure assessment:

- Evaluate the College's current capacity and resources to provide the necessary infrastructure, equipment, and staffing to effectively deliver the program.

9.4.5 Partnership and campus evaluation:

- Determine if the program can be delivered through existing partnerships or if new partnerships need to be established.

- Assess if the College's current campuses can accommodate the program or if new campuses are required.

9.4.6 Pathways and accreditations analysis:

- Identify potential new pathways for the program and the recognised accreditations that the program can offer.

9.4.7 Stakeholder review and feedback:

- Request feedback from stakeholders, including academic staff, administrators, and student representatives.

- Incorporate stakeholder feedback and make necessary revisions to the proposal.

9.4.8 Final proposal submission:

- Submit the final proposal to the SPAC or other relevant decision-making body for approval.

9.4.9 Approval and implementation:

- If the proposal is approved, develop a detailed implementation plan, including timelines, resource allocation, and operational strategies.

- Communicate the approval and implementation plan to all relevant parties, such as academic staff, administrators, and students.

9.4.10 Monitoring and evaluation:

- Monitor the program's progress and success according to the College KPI's.

- Evaluate the program periodically to ensure it continues to meet the approval criteria and make any necessary adjustments.

9.5 SPAC Section B Approval Flow: Organisational Due Diligence

#	Due Diligence	Criteria/Action	Comment/Source
1	Preliminary Assessment	Assess the potential partner's alignment with the Colleges mission, vision, and long-term strategic objectives.	
2		Identify any synergies between the potential partner's academic strengths and the Colleges areas of expertise.	
3		Determine if the proposed partnership addresses the needs of the College, its students, and other stakeholders.	
4		Verify that the partnership does not conflict with or undermine existing partnerships or academic programs.	
5	Academic Quality Assessment	Confirm the potential partner's degree-awarding powers, accreditation, and other relevant qualifications.	
6		Review the potential partner's most recent QAA/QSR report and TEF Award status, as well as any subject-specific accreditations or quality indicators.	
7		Analyse the potential partner's track record in student success rates, retention, and employability outcomes.	
8		Assess the potential partner's approach to teaching, learning, and assessment, as well as their commitment to innovation and continuous improvement.	
9	Financial and Operational Assessment	Conduct a comprehensive financial analysis of the potential partner, including an assessment of their	

#	Due Diligence	Criteria/Action	Comment/Source
		financial health, solvency, and long-term viability.	
10		Evaluate the partners ability to provide the necessary infrastructure, resources, and staffing to support the partnership, as well as any additional investments required.	
11		Examine the potential partner's organisational structure, governance, and management systems, ensuring they align with the Colleges values and standards.	
12		Identify any legal or regulatory issues that may impact the partnership and develop a plan to address them.	
13	Reputational and Risk Assessment	Perform a background check on the potential partner, including an analysis of any negative press, social media activity, or controversies.	
14		Assess the potential partner's ranking in the HE Sector, as well as any subject-specific or international rankings.	
15		Evaluate the potential partner's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as their approach to environmental sustainability and social responsibility	
16	Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement	Consult with internal and external stakeholders, including academic boards, faculty members, students, alumni, and industry partners, to gather feedback on the proposed partnership.	
17		Incorporate stakeholder feedback into the partnership	

#	Due Diligence	Criteria/Action	Comment/Source
		proposal and decision-making process.	
18	Implementation, Monitoring, and Continuous Improvement	Establish a clear implementation plan for the partnership, including timelines, responsibilities, and milestones.	
19		Assign a dedicated partnership manager to oversee the partnership's progress and success.	
20		Regularly review the partnership's performance against agreed-upon objectives and key performance indicators, making adjustments as necessary to ensure its ongoing success.	