

# Meeting Quality Standards when working in collaboration



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Coventry University has approximately 13000 students studying on courses overseas in 20 countries.

Our 2020 International Strategy contains the target to double the number of students studying overseas.

This means we are expanding our work with existing partners as well as forming new ones.

This talk reflects on our systems to assure ourselves that collaborations the challenges and risk involved.





# Three main forms of Collaboration

- Erasmus student exchange.
- Progression Agreements
- Transnational Education.



"IT LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE BRINGING IN THE NEW REGULATIONS MANUAL."

# The UK Quality Requirements

- The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's (QAA) mission is 'to safeguard standards and improve the quality of UK higher education wherever it is delivered around the world'.
- We are responsible for the quality of the awards given in our name wherever they are delivered and that they meet the QAA Quality Code.
- We maintain documents evidencing how our processes map onto the requirements of the QAA's Quality Code.

# Erasmus

Erasmus students are UK based on a UK courses and do a placements at another university in the EU.

Erasmus partner institutions are already authorised as part of the scheme.

Our QA maps the curriculum to ensure the students are studying the topics expected at the correct level so that they are prepared for the visit and for when they return.

We also carry out some due diligence to ensure the students have appropriate accommodation and are in a safe environment etc.

This is classed as a low risk operation.

# Progression Agreements

- This agreement with an overseas institution allows their students to study at Coventry University once they complete the appropriate entrance qualification.
- These students may start part way through the typical three year undergraduate degree course.
- To ensure the students are prepared faculty staff map their study to the requested input level.
- The university has a meeting whereby the request is considered. If approved it is valid for three years after which time the mapping would be re-checked.



# Transnational Education

- This is where the highest risk lies.
- Coventry University currently has 32 partners in 16 countries.
- To protect against risk all this work is coordinated through a central unit.
- It seeks new collaborations for franchising and validating courses. Offers Joint and Dual degrees.
- It liaises with academic faculty staff and the university's central quality assurance unit.

# Processes to mitigate risk

The following processes are performed to ensure the partner has facilities and administration resources to deliver against UK expectations. The process takes approximately three months to complete.

- Proposal to develop with a partner initially is considered by the academic faculty who will agree it has the staff resources to support the project.
- A university committee carries out legal and due diligence on the partner.
- For new partners a visit is conducted with representation from QA, APU and Faculty to prepare the visit for a formal approval visit.



# Institutional and Course Approval

- Faculty and Partner work together to produce course documentation and information on facilities management structure and administration processes.
- An Institutional approval event.
- A Course approval event.
  - Both events are held at the partner's premises and the panel includes:
    - Senior Member of the University as Chair.
    - Internal panel member.
    - External member - could be more than one.
    - Secretary.

# Ensuring QA standards are met

- Pre-moderation of assessments.
- Post-moderation of student work.
- Examination boards are held in country with representation from faculty and external examiner(s).
- For new partners there is an operational and standards review after the first year.
- Three year Interim Review. Six year Periodic Review.
- Each external examiner and faculty member write annual reports. An action plan is required each year.
- If there serious problems are identified a team is put together to work with the partner.

# Challenges

This is a complex business and we have different modes of operation depending on whether courses are franchised, validated or approved in other ways.

- Things to consider:
  - Academic standards
  - Process
  - Accuracy of information and compliance with QAA as well as partner QA requirements.
- It's is not all about us! There are two teams in partnership.



# Risks

- Reputational damage if quality standards are not met.
- Legal and financial issues.
- Approving courses or parts of course not taught in English.