## Development and Approval of Articulation Agreements

### Notes of Guidance

1. **Introduction**

Under an articulation agreement the University of Leicester (UOL) establishes a relationship with another Higher Education Institution (HEI) whereby students may commence their studies at the partner HEI, and upon completion of certain academic requirements may be permitted to transfer into the University of Leicester with advanced standing, for example, directly into the second year of an undergraduate programme. UOL has approximately 17 such agreements currently in place.

The full definition of an Articulation Agreement in the University’s Code of Practice on Managing Higher Education Provision with Others is as follows:

| **Articulation** | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Definition** | **Details** | **Risk level** |
| An arrangement whereby the University recognises all or part of another institution’s programme as a means of guaranteed entry onto a University programme | Entry onto a designated University programme with advanced standing is guaranteed subject to successful completion (which may be at a designated level) of the partner’s programme.  The partner institution is responsible for the recruitment and selection of students; for the registration and regulation of students, for the design and delivery of the programme and for the quality of the student experience and the standards of the award or credit.  Responsibilities for quality assurance processes may vary but the University is responsible for assuring itself that the programme meets its expectations in terms of the standard of entry for its degree programmes. | Low-medium |

Articulation agreements are a means of developing a flow of students directly into the second year of undergraduate programmes, or potentially the third year of integrated Masters programmes in some cases. Articulations can also exist at taught postgraduate level, whereby completion of a programme or credit at a partner institution allows students to enter a UOL programme with advanced standing.

Articulation agreements are often low risk as the credits that students have undertaken at partner institutions are typically not taken towards the classification of the UOL award. Students who join the University through articulation agreements are UOL students from the point at which they register and subject to all UOL rules and regulations.

1. **Principles**

The national framework for the approval and management of collaborative links is provided by [Chapter B10 of the Quality Assurance Agency’s Quality Code](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Pages/Quality-Code-Chapter-B10.aspx#.VsQ7v6NFCUk). The University’s framework for the development and approval of articulation agreements is set out in two Codes of Practice (COPs), namely the [COP on Managing Higher Education Provision with Others](http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/sas2/quality/codes/documents/managing-he-provision-with-others) and the [COP on Programme Development, Approval and Modification](http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/sas2/quality/codes/documents/programmeapproval.pdf). The marketing and other publication of such arrangements are also governed by [Consumer Rights Legislation](http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/sas2/courses/curriculum-change-process-for-2016-17/documents/CMA_InitialGuidanceforDepartments_201510.docx).

On the basis of the above documentation the following key principles should inform the development of any articulation agreement.

* Articulation agreements should only be sought where both the partner and the proposed model of collaboration are aligned with wider University and College strategic priorities.
* UOL is responsible for ensuring that anyone who enters the University through an articulation agreement has met the learning outcomes associated with any modules for which they are gaining exemption, and that such students will not be at any disadvantage when compared to other students on the programme.
* Under the Code of Practice on Programme Development and Approval no University programme, including articulation agreements, can be publicised or marketed until the full approval process is complete. This policy is informed by the University’s obligations under Consumer Rights legislation and extends to anyone who markets on behalf of the University. It must be clear from the outset of any development that no marketing may take place relating to the articulation agreement by either party until full approval has been given.

1. **Permitted Models of Collaboration**

Under some circumstances an articulation agreement may lead to an award from both institutions. Typically, this is where students complete their period of study at UOL and then return to their original institution, which accepts the credits studied at the University of Leicester towards their own award. The position of the University is that in such cases the decision to accept UOL credits towards another award is one for the partner institution. The UOL programme is a discreet period of study, governed entirely by UOL regulations and leading to a UOL award only.

Articulation agreements in the above model are sometimes referred to as Joint/Dual/Double awards or programmes however use of these terms is problematic. Under the UK quality assurance framework the term ‘joint award’ and ‘dual award’ carry particular meaning, referring to a jointly designed and delivered programme of study involving two or more partners. These are high risk and require significant operational and quality assurance infrastructure. Therefore, to describe an articulation agreement as a dual degree would be misleading as it is not a single, jointly designed programme. Inaccurate description of the nature of the relationship and the resulting awards could potentially leave the University vulnerable to challenge under Consumer Rights Legislation.

This is issue of terminology should be central to any considerations regarding the establishment of articulation agreements, and the University must ensure that the terminology used in any marketing material by UOL or the partner, and in the contract does not inaccurately describe the nature of the partnership or the resulting award.

1. **Identification of appropriate partners for articulation agreements**

The following factors should all be taken into account when evaluating potential partners:

* Alignment with the University Strategy and International Strategy
* The overall academic standing and reputation of the partner
* Whether the partner is one with which the University can legally contract
* The partner’s financial stability and its ability to provide appropriately qualified and experienced staff and other resources to ensure students are ready to commence study at UOL
* The robustness of the partner’s quality assurance and enhancement processes
* Whether it has experience of delivering programmes at the same level or can demonstrate potential to do so
* Whether the partner is able to demonstrate a knowledge, understanding and commitment to the requirement of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education
* Whether the partner has an appropriate infrastructure to support students
* Potential implications for accreditation of UOL programmes

In addition where proposed partners are located overseas:

* That the prospective partner has an understanding of current practices in UK HE
* That the prospective partner can address differences in expectations and cultures between higher education systems to ensure that the requirements of the arrangement can be fulfilled
* That students will either be taught in English or will have the opportunity to meet the University’s English Language Entry requirements ahead of progression to UOL.

The College International Directors are able to provide detailed contextual advice regarding where individual proposals may or may not align with College or institutional strategic priorities.

The International Office is able to provide expert advice on the University’s International Strategy, the University’s existing network of partnerships, the educational context of target countries and the profile of potential partner institutions.

The Quality Office manages the approval process for new collaborative arrangements, and is able to advise on the process, timescale and documentation required for approval of a new link.

1. **Approval Process Summary**

There is a three stage process for the approval of any collaborative arrangement. The specific steps and approving bodies for new Articulation Agreements are set out below.

As noted above, no new progression opportunity can be advertised to students either by the University or by any partner on behalf of the University, until the approval process is completed in full. Sufficient time should therefore be allowed in the development process to complete approval and market the programme to prospective students.

**5.1 Approval Routes for Articulation Agreements:**

| **Approval Stage** | **Documentation Required** | **Normal timescale** | **Minimum timescale** | **Approving Body** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Risk Assessment\* | Complete Risk Assessment Template | 18 months before first intake to UOL from partner programme | 12 months before first intake to UOL from partner programme | Collaborative Partnerships Management Group |
| 1. Business Case\* | Business case form | 15 months before first intake to UOL from partner programme | 9 months before first intake to UOL from partner programme | College Business Group |
| 1. Academic Case | Documentation submitted in stages 1 and 2  Summary of Proposal  Curriculum and achievement mapping documentation  Relevant UOL programme and module specifications  Relevant partner syllabus documents  Draft Articulation contract | 12 months before first intake to UOL from partner programme | 6 months before first intake to UOL from partner programme | Articulation Approval Panel |

\* where required, steps 1 and 2 can be undertaken in parallel, however both must be completed before consideration of the academic case (step 3).

1. **Guidance on the Approval Process**

**6.1 Step 1: Risk Assessment**

The first formal step of approval is the completion of a [risk assessment](http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/sas2/quality/codes/documents/hewo-app-3). This is considered by the [Collaborative Partnerships Management Group](http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/sas2/quality/codes/documents/hewo-app-13) (CPMG). The purpose of the document is to evaluate the appropriateness of the potential partner and the level of risk associated with the partnership. It is not intended to consider the detailed academic elements of the proposal. The document generates a risk score and identifies any mitigating factors which may be in place to manage the risk level. CPMG may either approve the proposal or refer it for further development.

A standard template will be completed by the Quality Office in conjunction with the International Office where appropriate. Input from the proposing team will be sought in relation to specific aspects of the proposal. A visit to the partner is not a formal requirement at this stage, however is considered preferable. CPMG may require that a visit take place before final approval is granted for the proposal to move to the next stage of the process.

**6.2 Step 2: Business Case**

The authority for approving the business case for a new articulation agreement rests with the College in which the relevant UOL academic department is based. Where an articulation agreement spans more than one College, all of the Colleges involved must approve the business case.

The business case should address all of the following factors:

* Realistic projection of student numbers with sufficient support evidence
* Any fees payable to the partner
* Any fee discounts or other financial incentives for students to proceed through the link
* Costs associated with maintaining the relationship, such as visits to the partner or associated marketing costs

**6.3 Academic Case**

The full academic case for an articulation agreement is considered by an Articulation Approval Panel. The Panel will consider the full documentation relating to the proposal, and will in particular scrutinise the correlation of Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) between the partner’s programme and the elements of the programme(s) at UOL from which exemption is requested. For example, where an articulation agreement proposes direct entry into the second year of an undergraduate programme, the Articulation Approval Panel must be satisfied that all of the ILOs associated with the first year of the relevant UOL programme have been met through completion of the partner’s programme.

The following documentation is required for submission to the Articulation Approval Panel:

**6.3.1 Programme and/or module syllabi for those elements of the partner’s programme which cover UOL ILOs**

These should be requested from the partner well in advance of the approval event as they will be necessary to complete the mapping exercise referred to below. The documents may not exist in English and if this is the case then they should be translated.

**6.3.2 A conversion table of marking scales at the partner and their UOL equivalent**

This is required to inform the mapping exercise referred to below, specifically in terms of agreeing the level of student performance required across the programme and in individual modules in order to allow progression. Detail on marking criteria and scales will need to be requested from the partner. Advice on the equivalence of marking scales can be provided by the International Office.

Where the articulation proposed would lead to students gaining exemptions from modules which would normally contribute towards the UOL degree classification (for example at Masters level), further detail should be provided on the process by which marks will be converted into UOL equivalents. The University [APL Policy](http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/sas2/quality/accreditation-of-prior-learning) states that where exemption is requested on the basis of certified learning (credits obtained from another HEI) a mark shall be assigned to each of the modules for which exemption is requested on the basis of the marks achieved in the prior study. These marks will then count towards the UOL degree classification. Accordingly, a detailed marking conversion table must be provided to demonstrate how the marks obtained at the partner will convert into UOL equivalents for inclusion within the degree classification calculation.

**6.3.3 Curriculum mapping document**

This document should set out the learning outcomes of the UOL programme and identify where in the partner’s programme these will be met. It may not always be possible to demonstrate a direct match for specific ILOs, however it may be possible to demonstrate the necessary level of achievement through a range of related or overlapping studies within the partner’s programme.

The mapping should be provided in tabular format and demonstrate which modules from the partner’s programme cover the ILOs of the UOL programme. This document should identify if these modules are core or elective. The mapping should therefore demonstrate which modules a student must pass to meet the UOL ILOs and therefore qualify for entry onto the UOL programmes. This will result in a set of pre-requisites that students must study in order to enable progression.

Following this, the mapping document should also confirm the level that students must pass the partner’s modules at in order to qualify for progression. Advice on the equivalence between the marks obtained on overseas programmes and UOL grades can be obtained from the International Office. A clear threshold mark (or equivalent such as GPA) for progression should be stated along with any specific requirements in individual modules.

A sample mapping document is provided in Appendix A.

**6.3.4 UOL Programme and module documentation**

Programme specifications for all of the UOL programmes onto which a student can progress will be provided by the Quality Office. Module specifications for all modules from which exemption will be requested will also be provided by the Quality Office.

**6.3.6 Draft Articulation Contract**

Both national and institutional policy requires that there is a legally binding contract in place between the two partners before any student can progress through the link. The Articulation Approval Panel requires evidence of this through the provision of a draft Articulation Contract. The Quality Office and International Office have developed a series of template contract documents which can be amended for individual proposals.

1. **Contacts**

| **Contact** |  | **For:** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| International Office | [Internationaloffice@le.ac.uk](mailto:Internationaloffice@le.ac.uk) | Advice on:  Existing University links  Status of proposed partners  Country or region specific context |
| College International Directors | Professor Mike Barer:  [mrb19@le.ac.uk](mailto:mrb19@le.ac.uk) | Advice on:  College specific international strategy alignment  Opportunity for collaboration within the College |
| Mr Ian Jarvis:  [imj1@le.ac.uk](mailto:imj1@le.ac.uk) |
| Professor Martin Halliwell: [mrh17@le.ac.uk](mailto:mrh17@le.ac.uk) |
| Quality Office | Andrew Petersen  [ap262@le.ac.uk](mailto:ap262@le.ac.uk) | Advice on:  Approval processes  Timescales for development  Documentation required |

Quality Office

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**Modules for APL into BA English from PARTNER**

**STRUCTURE OF PARTNER PROGRAMME:**

Students complete two semesters per year and will therefore have completed four semesters before progressing to UoL.

Detail on:

Number of credits studied per semester

Timing of modules

Equivalence of credit and workload with UOL

**STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

UoL requires students to have achieved an overall average of at least 80% during their first two years at PARTNER to qualify for progression. Students are also required to meet UoL’s English language requirements (currently 6.5 in IELTS or equivalent).

Conversion table for the equivalence between PARTNER and UOL grades (STATE REFERENCE):

| **Partner mark** | **UOL equivalent mark** |
| --- | --- |
| 70 – 79% | 50 – 59% |
| 80 – 89% | 60 – 69% |
| 90% + | 70% + |

Detail on:

Specific level of achievement required in terms of overall average and specific module marks in order to progress

English Language Requirements for entry (these will be the same as the standard requirements set out in Senate Regulation 1)

How students will reach these requirements if the partner’s programme is not taught in English

**PRE REQUISITE MODULES**

The following module specific pre-requisites will apply to students progressing from PARTNER:

All students will be required to complete and pass the following modules at PARTNER

History of English

English Novels

Practical English Writing

An appreciation of Shakespeare’s plays

Students will also be required to complete and pass one of the following modules at PARTNER:

British and American Literature: An Introduction

Appreciating English Poetry

A full curriculum mapping demonstrating the coverage of UOL learning outcomes by PARTNER modules is overleaf

**Mapping of Learning outcomes for BA English level 1 core modules:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **UoL Module** | **Learning Outcome** | **Covered in PARTNER Module(s)** |
| EN1010  Reading English | understand and analyse a variety of literary forms | British and American Literature: An Introduction (semester 2)  Appreciating English Poetry (semester 3)  English Novels (semester 2) |
|  | assess critically, with clarity and fairness, their own academic writing | Practical English Writing (semester 3) |
|  | be able in seminars to articulate their own analytical processes and responses to different texts | British and American Literature: An Introduction (semester 2)  Appreciating English Poetry (semester 3)  English Novels (semester 2) |
|  | write critical analyses of literary texts to a standard appropriate for a first-year degree student of English, reflecting on the distinction between pre-university and degree-level English | British and American Literature: An Introduction (semester 2)  Appreciating English Poetry (semester 3)  Practical English Writing (semester 3)  English Novels (semester 2) |
|  | absorb and use tutorial feedback to help improve their writing | *Tutorials are not a feature of the teaching style at PARTNER.* |
|  | incorporate the techniques of close reading into their own engagement with texts | British and American Literature: An Introduction (semester 2)  Appreciating English Poetry (semester 3)  Practical English Writing (semester 3)  English Novels (semester 2) |
|  |  |  |
| EN1020  The Novel | understand the characteristic features of the genre | English Novels (semester 2) |
|  | debate issues of 'representation' and 'reality' | English Novels (semester 2) |
|  | trace the development of the novel across time | English Novels (semester 2) |
|  | show awareness of relevant literary movements | English Novels (semester 2) |
|  | demonstrate the ability to present a coherent argument on a topic related to the course | English Novels (semester 2) |
|  | use appropriate critical vocabulary to discuss novels | English Novels (semester 2) |
|  | demonstrate ability to evaluate and synthesise other critical views | English Novels (semester 2) |
|  |  |  |
| EN1040  History of the English Language | discuss and analyse language using appropriate methodologies | History of English (semester 4) |
|  | demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the evolution of English | History of English (semester 4) |
|  | show an awareness of contemporary issues in language and society | History of English (semester 4) |
|  | put into practice a range of skills necessary for empirical and quantitative sociolinguistic research | History of English (semester 4)  Practical English Writing (semester 3) |
|  |  |  |
| EN1050 Renaissance Drama: Shakespeare and his Contemporaries | will have acquired a broad knowledge of the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries with a grasp of their underlying  chronology | An Appreciation of Shakespeare's Plays (semester 3) |
|  | will understand the impact of the historical context on the development and thematic concerns of early modern drama | An Appreciation of Shakespeare's Plays (semester 3) |
|  | will be able to distinguish between different dramatic genres and the styles of different playwrights | An Appreciation of Shakespeare's Plays (semester 3)  *(course limited to Shakespeare and not other Renaissance playwrights)* |
|  | will be equipped with the methodologies and skills necessary to analyse early modern plays with regard to the critical issues  of class, race and gender | An Appreciation of Shakespeare's Plays (semester 3) |
|  | will be able to comment critically on theatrical and/or cinematic productions of Renaissance plays, learning the skills  necessary for writing an analytical review | An Appreciation of Shakespeare's Plays (semester 3) |
|  | will recognise the impact of early modern staging methods, collaboration and printing practices on the plays | An Appreciation of Shakespeare's Plays (semester 3) |