

Principles and process for the approval, monitoring and review of Articulation arrangements

1. Definition and Principles

- 1.1. Articulation is a formal arrangement where the University recognises all or part of another institution's named award as providing credit towards specific University of Worcester courses, guaranteeing admission with advanced standing. The right to such advanced standing applies to all students covered by the Articulation Arrangement.
- 1.2. Articulation is primarily a recruitment and admissions partnership arrangement. The University does not approve or endorse the quality of the Articulation Partner's award but assures itself that the curriculum and academic standards of provision under an Articulation Arrangement will prepare students appropriately for entry with advanced standing to specific University courses.
- 1.3. Within the above definition, Articulation Arrangements can take a range of forms. In some cases there may be teaching and assessment input to the partner's programme and/or the University's programme by both parties. This may be in the form of educational consultancy and/or direct input. In such cases, it is essential to agree at an early stage the nature and terms and conditions of the proposed partnership. It is particularly important to ascertain when the partnership will be predicated on Joint/Dual degree arrangements as opposed to Articulation Arrangements, as this has clear implications for the design, development, management and academic governance of the proposed arrangement. Schools should have early discussions with the Head of Collaborative Programmes.
- 1.4. In some cases the University may decide that it is appropriate to sub-contract elements of teaching and learning input to the partner programme on its behalf to a local third party. Where this is the case such arrangements are subject to separate formal approval. Such approval will involve a proposal to Academic Planning and Portfolio Group (APPG), due diligence and risk assessment, an approval meeting and full documentation of responsibilities, terms and conditions and governance through a formal contract. This approval process will be managed by the Academic Quality Unit.
- 1.5. Articulation Arrangements that involve input by one or both parties into the programme of the other party, including on a sub-contracted basis, will incorporate the terms and conditions under which this will operate in an annexe to the main Articulation Agreement. This is to provide clarity and transparency for all parties.
- 1.6. All Articulation Arrangements will be required to undergo an approval process in order to evidence the appropriateness of academic judgments made and the viability and suitability of the proposed institutional collaboration and to ensure that University systems are in place to record, monitor and review each Articulation Arrangement.

- 1.7. Approval of an Articulation Arrangement entails careful detailed curriculum mapping by the University of the partner institution's programme against the modules of a related University programme to ensure a good academic fit in terms of academic standards, curriculum content and learning outcomes, to support progression and enable students to succeed in their studies. This may involve agreeing specific entry conditions for progression to the University through the arrangement.
- 1.8. Articulation will normally be considered for awards which will grant entry to FHEQ Levels 5 and 6 of named awards of the University. Articulation can also be considered for entry to postgraduate awards where appropriate. Where credit is granted at level 5 or above, the approval process will include external examiner scrutiny.
- 1.9. Recognised credit delivered through articulating partners will be clearly noted in the transcript for the final University award.
- 1.10. All Articulation Arrangements are subject to a formal agreement which must be signed by both parties before they commence and before any students can be formally considered and accepted on to a University degree through the Articulation Arrangements.
- 1.11. Schools appoint a link contact for the Articulation Partner.

2. Approval Process

- 2.1. Proposals for a new Articulation Arrangement should initially be presented to APPG, via a Preliminary Enquiries form if with a new partner.
- 2.2. The approval of an Articulation Arrangement with a potential new partner requires completion of the initial stages of the partner approval process:

- Stage 1:** Identification of potential partnership
- Stage 2:** Preliminary enquiries and partnership risk assessment submitted to Academic Planning and Portfolio Committee (APPG)
- Stage 3:** Approval to proceed and confirmation of arrangements and timeline for partnership approval
- Stage 4:** Due diligence

This informs a judgement about the suitability of an institution/organisation or awarding body to be considered as a partner of the University for the purposes of Articulation and forms the basis for the development of programme specific Articulation Agreements.

Following this and for existing partners, the following stages apply:

- Stage 5:** Full curriculum mapping
- Stage 6:** Site visit
- Stage 7:** Articulation Approval Report compiled by the School and AQU for ASQEC and Academic Board approval of the proposed Articulation Arrangement
- Stage 8:** Articulation Agreement

- 2.3. These are not necessarily consecutive stages, on occasion it may be appropriate, for example, to carry out the detailed curriculum mapping at an early stage to ascertain viability of the proposed arrangements. Equally, a site visit may take place at an early stage to progress discussion of the proposed arrangement with a new partner.
- 2.4. The time period required for approval of a proposed Articulation Arrangement will depend on a variety of factors, including whether the proposal relates to a new or an existing University partner, the status and national context within which the partner is working, and the nature of the proposed Articulation Programme of the partner. Arrangements with new partners, particularly overseas partners, are likely to take at least twelve months, if not more, to establish and prepare since they are likely to involve the building of relationships and mutual understanding as well as some formal due diligence and preparation of paperwork. Advice should be sought from the Head of Collaborative Programmes at the earliest opportunity.

3. Stage 5: Full Curriculum Mapping

- 3.1. The School must undertake a full curriculum mapping process to ensure that there is a match between the programme at the partner institution and the UW programme at the point of entry in terms of academic standards, credit value and course content (ie the level, volume and content of prior learning). Such mapping serves to determine equivalence of the partner programme and that students have achieved the appropriate standards with pre-requisite knowledge and skills to join the University programme at the point of entry.
- 3.2. The output standards of the programme at the partner institution must be directly evidenced, through scrutiny of curriculum/programme specification/syllabi, assessments, marking and grading criteria, processes for quality assurance, samples of assessed work, external verification reports etc. Appropriate academic staff should be engaged in this scrutiny process and the external examiner for the University programme should also be involved.
- 3.3. Consideration should be given to the learning and teaching experience of students on the articulated programme so as not to disadvantage students' further study at the University. In some cases a bridging arrangement or supplementary teaching and assessment may need to be put in place. Consideration should also be given to liaison and transition arrangements to support student progression to the University. Evidence of the curriculum mapping and scrutiny must be retained by the School.
- 3.4. A curriculum mapping report (a template is provided), to be appended to the Articulation Approval report, should be produced covering the following:
 - review of programme specification/syllabus and match in terms of learning outcomes, content and level with UW programme
 - review of marking/grading criteria and samples of student work
 - external verification/accreditation or other reports for the programme
 - quality assurance mechanisms that apply to the partner's programme
 - advice/confirmation from UW external examiner for UW programme mapping conclusions and recommendations.

4. Stage 6: Site Visit

- 4.1. Assessment and verification by the School of the prospective partner's premises as a learning environment is an essential part of the approval process and a written report is required. There may be circumstances where the need for a site visit and report are waived, this should be discussed with the Head of Collaborative Programmes. Likewise, there may be circumstances where the arrangements for a site visit require additional personnel to be involved. Site visits are often combined with discussions with the partner about the operation of the Articulation Agreement.
- 4.2. A short site visit report form, to be appended to the Articulation Approval report, should be produced covering the following:
 - details of visit (dates, meetings, participants, etc)
 - physical facilities and teaching accommodation
 - learning resources
 - IT and computing resources
 - student records arrangements
 - specialist resources relating to the proposed articulated programme
 - conclusions and recommendations.

5. Stage 7: Articulation Arrangement Approval report for ASQEC and Academic Board Approval

- 5.1. The School drafts the Articulation Arrangement Approval Report in association with the Academic Quality Unit prior to sign-off and submission to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee (ASQEC). The Articulation Arrangement Approval Report sets out the rationale and context for the proposed arrangements and includes reference to the outcomes of the due diligence report from AQU (where required), the School curriculum mapping report, and the site visit report (which are submitted to AQU).
- 5.2. The report must be signed off by the Head of Academic Quality and the Head of School. It is presented to ASQEC for scrutiny. ASQEC is responsible for confirming that the due diligence, curriculum mapping and approval process has been carried out robustly and in line with University policy and procedures. If ASQEC is satisfied with the report, it will recommend approval of the proposed partnership and Articulation Arrangement to Academic Board.

6. Stage 8: Articulation Agreement

- 6.1. Once approved by ASQEC the School should provide to the Head of Collaborative Programmes a draft Articulation Agreement based on the standard template.
- 6.2. The draft agreement must accurately reflect the intended arrangements with the partner and should therefore be shared with the partner at the draft stage. However, it is important that it is made clear that the draft agreement is subject to University level review and approval.
- 6.3. The Articulation Agreement is time limited, normally for a period of three years in the first instance.
- 6.4. Once the draft Articulation Agreement has been agreed by the School, the partner

and AQU, it will be forwarded by AQU to the Vice Chancellor's Office for signature and then to the Chief Executive or equivalent of the partner.

- 6.5. The signed Articulation Agreements will be forwarded to the University's Legal and Governance Team to be stored and recorded. AQU will also record it on the Collaborative Register and report annually to the Collaborative Academic Provision Sub-Committee (CAPSC).
- 6.6. Any amendments to the agreement, other than to named contacts, that should subsequently become necessary, are subject to negotiation between the two parties.
- 6.7. The arrangements should be kept under review. Agreements may be terminated in line with the Termination clause in the Agreement.

7. Responsibilities of the University School for Management of Articulation Arrangements

- 7.1. The following identifies the key responsibilities for effective management of the Articulation Arrangements by the University:
 - i. At least one visit annually to the Articulation Partner institution to check the health of the partnership, explore any issues, meet with students, support in-country recruitment and to liaise with staff regarding the management and currency of the arrangement.
 - ii. Informing the partner of any changes to the University course(s) relevant to the Articulation
 - iii. Ensuring curriculum mapping is kept up to date.
 - iv. Monitoring and approval of all marketing and recruitment material.
 - v. Confirming academic entry requirements and recruitment targets annually.
 - vi. Establishing a student journey schedule detailing key milestones for activities associated with progression to the University, including provision of information to partner students, ascertaining student intention to progress to the University, completion of application, confirmation, visa applications, registration, etc. The schedule should be confirmed annually with internal stakeholders (including the University Admissions Office) and with external stakeholders including partners at the start of the academic year before entry to the University.
 - vii. Providing information, advice and guidance for students intending to progress to the University.
 - viii. Arranging, in liaison with the Chair and the AQU, a Joint Management Committee (JMC) for the partnership annually; the JMC to include representation from all stakeholders.

8. Responsibilities of the Articulation Partner Institution

- 8.1. The following identifies the key responsibilities of the Articulation Partner Institution in effectively managing an Articulation Arrangement:
- a. Ensuring that its relevant portfolio of courses has all the necessary regulatory and statutory authority and Government licences to operate and that any terms or conditions required are met in full.
 - b. Providing a full transcript of results for all students applying to the University as soon as results are confirmed.
 - c. Notifying the University of any changes to be made to curriculum of the relevant Articulation Programmes in advance of implementation of the changes.
 - d. Providing opportunities for the University representatives to meet with the partner students to brief them about the University and to advise students on application procedure and strategy.
 - e. Providing any marketing and recruitment material related to the Articulation Arrangement with the University of Worcester for approval.

9. Annual Monitoring and Review

- 9.1. A Joint Management Committee (JMC) with appropriate representation from each partner should be established to provide effective oversight and management of the arrangement. The JMC must have at least one formally minuted meeting annually to review the operation of the Articulation Arrangement.
- 9.2. Schools are responsible for reviewing annually the currency of curriculum mapping and that this is updated and reapproved as appropriate. Planned curriculum changes by either the partner organisation or the University to the relevant courses should trigger a check on the currency of the curriculum mapping.
- 9.3. Schools must provide a short annual monitoring report for each articulation arrangement which reviews the operation of the arrangement, including any changes going forward, plus the evaluation of recruitment, progression and outcomes for students who progress to the University. The Articulation Arrangement Annual Report and associated action plan (template provided) is a continuous and live document that will be completed in accordance with the normal cycle for AER processes and must be agreed and signed by key stakeholders of both parties. The report and associated action plan will be scrutinised by the relevant School and received by CAPSC annually.
- 9.4. Articulation Arrangements will undergo cyclical reviews 3 years after signing the initial agreement and every six years thereafter. A review will be informed by the annual reports together with School, central services, Articulation Partner and student feedback. This review will lead to a renewal of the agreement for another 6 years; agreements will not be renewed without a prior review exercise.
- 9.5. Major changes required for the Articulation Arrangement or University concerns about its implementation can trigger an earlier review.

Related Policies, Procedures, Guidance, Forms or Templates

[Partnership Approval Process](#)

[Articulation Arrangements](#) (for templates below):

Articulation Arrangements Advanced Standing Curriculum Mapping Template

Articulation Arrangements Approval Report Template for ASQEC [the report to ASQEC for approval of the arrangement]

Articulation Arrangements Annual Monitoring Report Template

Articulation Agreement Template and Schedule 1 (available on request from Academic Quality Unit)

Approval/Review Table

Item	Notes
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Policy Officer	Head of Collaborative Programmes/Head of Academic Quality
Department	Directorate of Quality and Educational Development
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Committee	Date	Change