

Third-Party Academic Partnerships Policy

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1. Purpose

- a. This policy provides a framework to:
 - i. guide decisions regarding the development, approval and management of all academic partnerships between Flinders University and third-party providers
 - ii. set clear authorities and responsibilities for the approval and management of such third-party partnerships, and
 - iii. ensure that third-party academic partnerships are aligned with the University's strategy and maintain Flinders standards for commercial viability, quality and integrity of outcomes.
- b. It assists the University to comply with the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* (TEQSA Act), which requires a registered provider to ensure that any third party delivering a course on its behalf (either wholly or partly) delivers the course consistent with all of the requirements of the HES Framework.
- c. This policy operates in conjunction with the Education Quality Framework (as applicable), the Award Courses Policy and the Non-Award Courses Policy (under development), which provide the quality assurance frameworks for course accreditation and approval.

2. Scope

- a. This policy applies to formal academic partnership arrangements with domestic and international third parties for the delivery of all or part of Flinders' award and non-award courses.
- b. It applies to third-party academic partnership arrangements established from the Effective Date (see below). For third-party academic partnership arrangements established prior to this date, the monitoring and review requirements under this policy and supporting procedures will apply.
- c. This policy does not apply to:
 - i. commercial activity that does not involve a Flinders award or non-award course
 - ii. research partnerships involving individual research projects, research funding or researcher collaborations
 - iii. a cotutelle arrangement i.e. joint supervision of a doctoral candidature by Flinders and an international higher education institution – see [Cotutelle Arrangement Procedures](#)

- iv. articulation and credit recognition arrangements
- v. student and staff mobility arrangements.

3. Definitions

Dual award	education programs where Flinders and a third-party academic partner jointly design and offer an award, where graduates will receive two certificates, one from each institution, upon completion of the program.
Joint award	education programs where Flinders and a third-party academic partner jointly design and offer an award, where graduates will receive a single certificate that may be conferred by either Flinders only, or by both institutions, upon completion of the program.
Transnational education	education programs where students are enrolled as a Flinders student for study delivered overseas (outside of Australia) and may complete their entire Flinders University award at the overseas location.
Twinning award	education programs which allow students to complete a portion of their award with a third-party academic partner before transferring to Flinders to complete the rest of the award. Flinders has academic input (which may include provision of curriculum) into the academic partner's program, and may provide ongoing quality assurance of their program. A student enrolled in such a program is not a Flinders student until they transfer and enrol into a Flinders program.

4. Policy statement

4.1. Types of Partnerships

- a. The University may enter into a range of third-party academic partnerships, including:
 - i. joint, twinning or dual award arrangements
 - ii. transnational education delivery of courses
 - iii. licensing or hosting agreements
 - iv. research training partnerships, including partnered, joint or double degree arrangements
 - v. third-party arrangements involving training services associated with Vocational Education and Training (VET).
- b. If there is any doubt about the type of a particular third-party academic partnership and whether this policy applies, seek advice from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students) and Vice-President and Pro Vice-Chancellor (International) who may at any time determine the type of partnership and whether this policy applies.

4.2. General Principles

- a. The University will only enter into an academic partnership with a third-party provider if:
 - i. the partnership is consistent with the strategic direction of the University
 - ii. the third-party provider can maintain the University's quality standards
 - iii. there is an equivalence of curriculum, assessment and graduate outcomes
 - iv. the third-party provider complies with relevant legislative and regulatory requirements both within Australia and, where relevant, in the country of deliver.
- b. The University's preference is to enter into arrangements with third-party providers that:
 - i. are commercially significant and provide sustainable, long-term partnerships that are mutually beneficial and create impact and value for the University, with due consideration to business risks
 - ii. have strong connections with industry and/or government at the teaching location, providing broader opportunities for engagement by Flinders staff and students
 - iii. create scale and encompass multiple activities across Colleges, where appropriate
 - iv. enhance the domestic and international reputation and profile of the University, impacting positively on rankings.

4.3. Approval and Renewal

- a. All third-party academic partnerships are to be developed, approved and renewed in accordance with the [Third-Party Academic Partnership Procedures](#).
- b. Major changes to third-party partnership arrangements must be considered and approved in accordance with the same processes. These changes include, but are not limited to:
 - i. the addition of other Flinders courses to the partnership
 - ii. the addition of new delivery locations
 - iii. changes to the partnership model or structure
 - iv. changes to the provider organisation and its executive leadership team or ownership that actually or potentially affect their ability to maintain quality standards and/or achieve equivalency of learning outcomes
 - v. any other changes to the third-party provider that affect their ability to maintain the partner suitability requirements (see s.4.2.a above).

4.4. Monitoring and Review

- a. Third-party academic partnership arrangements will be reviewed annually and performance reported to the Education Quality Committee in accordance with the [Third-Party Academic Partnership Procedures](#) and in conjunction with the requirements of the [Award Course Improvement and Accreditation Procedures](#) (for award courses).
- b. The review will consider the academic quality, equivalency and regulatory compliance of the third-party provider.

4.5. Termination

- a. Termination of a third-party partnership arrangement must be carried out in liaison with Legal and in a manner that ensures Flinders' interests are protected, including the interests of Flinders students.

- b. Before a third-party partnership arrangement is terminated, consideration must be given to:
- i. the teach-out responsibilities to students
 - ii. any legal, financial and reputational implications
 - iii. any other Colleges or areas of University involved in the partnership
 - iv. compliance with relevant regulatory and legislative requirements.
- c. A third-party partnership arrangement can only be terminated with the advice of Legal and by the delegate who entered into the arrangement on behalf of the University or the Vice-Chancellor.
- d. When a third-party partnership arrangement is terminated, Academic Senate via the Education Quality Committee must be informed of the teach-out arrangements for remaining students.

5. Authorities

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students) and Vice-President and Pro Vice-Chancellor (International)

- a. Determine partnership type and applicability of this policy, in cases of doubt.

6. Supporting procedures

Supporting procedures are part of this policy and provide additional detail to give practical effect to the policy principles.

[Third-Party Academic Partnership Procedures](#)

Approval Authority	Academic Senate
Responsible Officer	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students) and Vice-President and Pro Vice-Chancellor (International)
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* Unless otherwise indicated, this policy or procedures still apply beyond the review date.

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