

Partnership Review

1. Partnership Review is a review of the financial and legal standing of a partner provider, and provides an opportunity to review the viability and success of the partnership arrangement.
2. Partnership Review applies to:
 - Partners offering taught validated, franchise, joint and dual collaborative programmes where a partner is involved in the delivery of LJMU credit.
 - Partners offering approved advanced standing arrangements.

Please note the following exceptions:

- Partners where provision is limited to non-credit bearing study abroad, which is of lower risk.
 - Partnerships where activity is limited to Dual PhD awards, which are time limited in nature.
 - A partner where all programme(s) are closing.
3. The schedule of activity will be agreed by the university. The first partnership review for a new partner must normally take place within 3 years of a contract being signed, and a partnership review must normally take place at least every 6 years.
 4. Should a request to defer Partnership Review be received, a proposal should be prepared by the Academic Quality and Standards Team Leader (Collaborative Provision) for consideration and approval by Academic Planning and Fees Panel (APFP). The proposal prepared by the Academic Quality and Standards Team Leader (Collaborative Provision) would be intended to enable APFP to make a risk-based decision, and would include an explanation of the contractual arrangement (for example, if the duration is non-standard due to external requirements) and a rationale for any proposals, taking account of any pertinent information relating to the legal identity of the partner, the financial history of the partnership and any other significant points to note, relating to the legal or financial aspects of the partnership that have been raised by stakeholders across the institution.
 5. It should be noted that this process will not replace other university processes such as Continuous Monitoring and Enhancement (CME), validation, periodic programme review, or quinquennial review. The lenses of the Partnership Review focus upon different areas to these processes.
 6. A Partnership Review will take place within a scheduled academic year, and the review activity should normally be completed, and signed off, by May of that academic year, normally prior to the year that the contract expires.
 7. Exceptionally, the Partnership Review process can be instigated ahead of schedule. Early instigation of the Partnership Review process normally occurs in instances where

the applicable audit/monitoring processes, have identified areas for attention. An informed decision on whether to instigate the process, ahead of schedule, will be made by the Academic Registrar.

8. A summary report of activity will be compiled by the Academic Quality and Standards Team and reported to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC).
9. A summary of the Partnership Review process is outlined in Appendix 1, at the end of this guidance. The process involves a number of stages, which each have associated milestones for completion. This guidance provides details about each of these stages and milestones.

Stage 1 – Partnership Review Consultation meeting

10. Partnership review is initiated, and the Partnership Review Consultation is arranged, by the Academic Quality and Standards Team. Key stakeholders who have been involved in working with the partnership will be invited, including School representatives, Finance (to factor in partner's payment history), Faculty Head of Operations, Student Governance, Academic Quality and Standards, International Relations, Associate Deans (Global Engagement) (where relevant) and the Doctoral Academy (PhD arrangements only).
11. In order to allow sufficient input by stakeholders, where the number of relevant stakeholders exceeds 12, multiple Partnership Review Consultation meetings will be held. These will be themed by role rather than by School.
12. To inform the meeting, initial details of the partnership and key pieces of evidence will be collated by the Academic Quality and Standards Team in advance of the consultation meeting. This will include items such as:
 - Summary details of the scope of the partnership, including the number and status of the programmes and Schools/Faculties involved.
 - A copy of the existing contract and any signed variations
 - Outputs of the university's academic quality management processes
 - Details of any Exceptions to the standard operating arrangements for collaborative partnerships, that have been previously approved for the partnership.
13. During the consultation meeting, the stakeholder feedback section of the partnership review template will be completed, reflecting input from the various stakeholders in relation to the operation and performance of the programmes and partnership, and identify future possibilities where relevant. For example:
 - Other partnership activity.
 - Any proposed programmes in development.
 - PSRB or other 'in country' oversight.
 - Any significant themes raised through quality processes and partnership working.
14. In addition, the meeting will be used to allow the Academic Quality and Standards Team to briefly outline the next steps of the process.

15. Once the Partnership Review Consultation meeting has taken place, the notes will be circulated to all attendees as well as to any stakeholders who were invited and were unable to attend. Stakeholders will be provided with a time-limited opportunity to provide any additional written feedback and/or to expand on points raised in the meetings.
16. After stakeholders have had an opportunity to provide feedback, the completed Stage 1 will be shared with a representative(s) of the Executive Leadership Team, in order to determine whether the partnership should not continue.
17. **Milestone 1** – ELT endorsement of the proposal to proceed to Stage 2.

Stage 2 – Costing and Pricing

18. To inform the costing activity, a set of details about the programme(s) will need to be prepared by the LJMU School(s), using a standardised set of questions, the Costing Assumptions. This will be requested when the consultation meeting notes are circulated. Completion of the costing assumptions will be informed by the data collected and narrative provided at Stage 1 of the Partnership Review, and should reflect the experience of delivery of the programmes as well as incorporating consideration of any planned changes for the next contractual term.
19. Once completed, the outcome of the re-costing activity will be used to inform the financial arrangements for the new contract, which will usually be for a five-year term. Therefore, the re-costing should include all programmes which will be encompassed within the contract, regardless of how recently they have been approved.
20. Once the Costing Assumptions have been completed, the lead proposer within the School should share them with Finance, and arrange a costing meeting. In instances where the partnership is with an international partner and involves programmes across a number of different Schools/Faculties, the costing meeting may be arranged by International Relations, following completion by the Schools of the Costing Assumptions.
21. The following representatives should be invited to attend the costing meeting:
 - A representative from the link School(s)
 - Finance
 - *For international partnerships* – a representative from International Relations

In addition, Associate Academic Registrars can be invited to costings, for both UK and international partnerships, and/or can provide advice relating to the costing, however their input is optional and is not required for the activity to go ahead.

22. The Proposed Pricing Details, as an output of the costing meeting, will be agreed with input from each of the above stakeholders (the School, Finance and International Relations, where relevant).
23. When they are prepared, the School Director, or nominee, will submit the following documentation for endorsement by the Faculty Management Team (FMT):
 - Sections 1 and 2 of the Partnership Review template, and
 - The completed costing spreadsheet (including the Costing Assumptions and the Proposed Pricing Details).

24. **Milestone 2a** – FMT endorsement of the proposal to proceed to APFP.
25. The FMT endorsed proposal will be returned to the Academic Quality and Standards Team, to submit the proposals to APFP.
26. **Milestone 2b** – APFP endorsement of the proposal to proceed to stage 3.
27. If the proposal is not approved (either by FMT or by APFP), the next steps will depend upon the circumstances resulting in the non-approval and will be specified as part of the APFP outcome.

Stage 3 – Agreement of the financial arrangements with the partner

28. Following APFP agreement of the initial sections of the Partnership Review and the associated pricing details, negotiation with the partner to reach an agreed price will be led by the Director of International Relations for international partners and by the Academic Registrar for UK partners.
29. A standard approach will be used for this communication, and will include the provision of:
 - A basic summary of payment terms and the way that charges are constructed – e.g., administration fees, validation fees, minimum fees, etc.
 - Details of the standard collaborative operating arrangements.
30. **Milestone 3** – agreement between LJMU and the partner organisation on the financial terms for the next contractual period.
31. If the LJMU and the partner do not reach an agreement on the financial terms, this will be raised with the Chairs of APFP, in order for the next steps to be agreed.

Stage 4 – Due Diligence

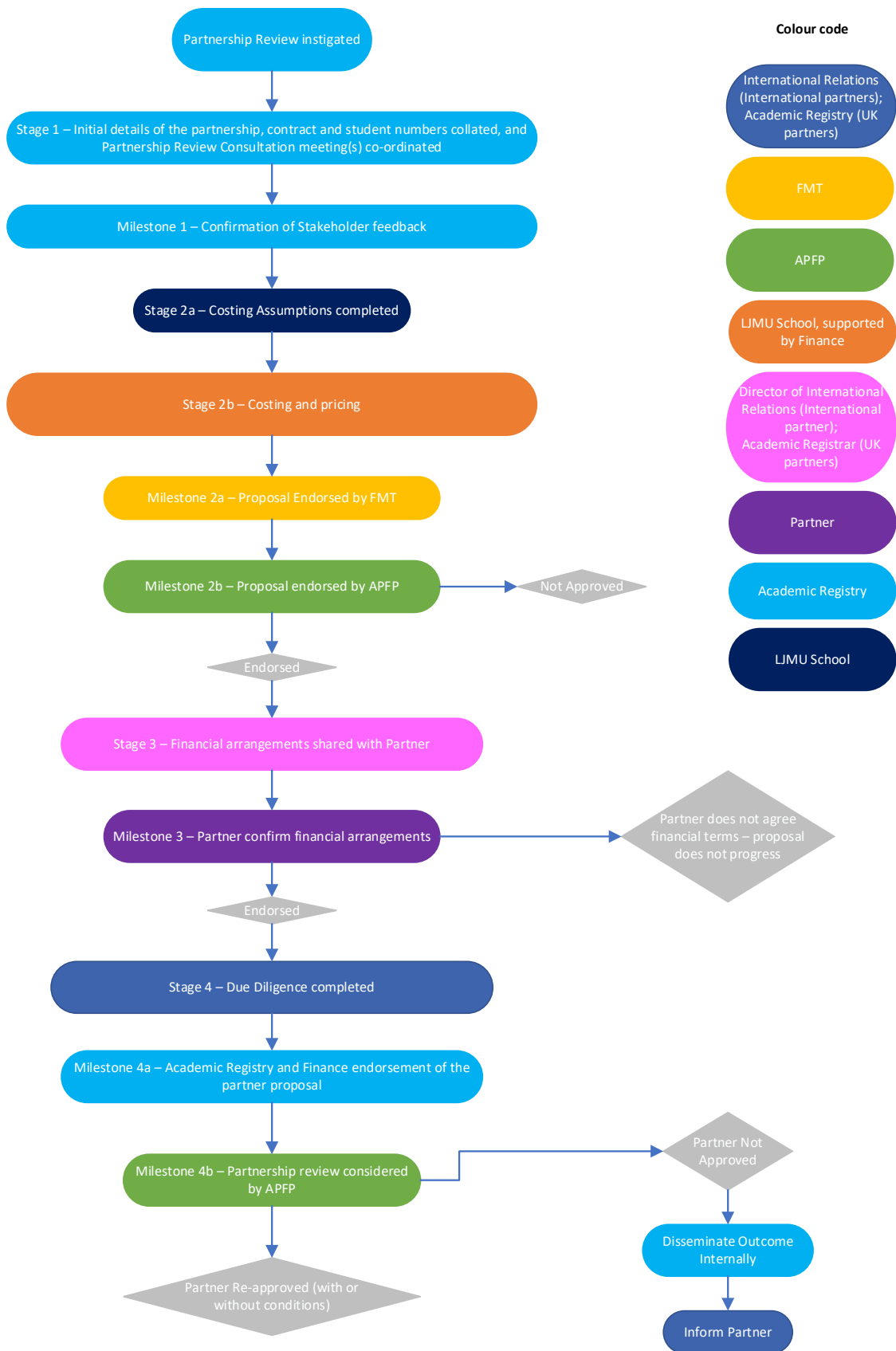
32. An updated consideration of the due diligence, including the legal questionnaire, will be co-ordinated by International Relations for international partnerships and by Academic Registry for UK partnerships. This can commence once the partner has provided written confirmation of agreement to the financial terms.
33. Completion of this information will require input and the provision of some documentation from the partner organisation. Where the required documentation is available only in a language other than English, translation will be required of the key content of these documents.
34. **Milestone 4a** – the detailed due diligence, alongside the answers and evidence provided at the previous stages, will collectively be considered for endorsement by the Academic Quality and Standards Team. A risk matrix is used to ensure consistent and informed consideration of the completed due diligence.
35. The Academic Quality and Standards Team may suggest conditions of partner approval as part of their endorsement.

36. This stage will include financial checks, in compliance with the Financial Due Diligence Policy (available via the [Policy Centre](#)), to be completed by Finance based on the information and evidence provided by the partner.
37. **Milestone 4b** – the completed Partnership Review, including the answers and evidence collated at all of the stages as outlined above, are considered for approval by APFP.
38. The Academic Quality and Standards Team will circulate notification of the decision of APFP, including any conditions of partner approval, with the link Faculty and International Relations. The partner will be informed of the outcome by International Relations (International partners) or Academic Registry (UK partners).
39. Where the outcome of the Partnership Review is an agreement for continuation of the partnership, the partner will be contacted to initiate development and agreement of the new contract.
40. Any conditions of partner approval will usually need to be met before the university will sign a new contract with the partner. This will be specified within the APFP outcomes.
41. Oversight of partner approval conditions is maintained by AQSC.

Reporting

42. A report will be completed by the Academic Quality and Standards Team and submitted annually to AQSC, to record:
 - Confirmation that expected Partnership Review activity has taken place.
 - Any monitoring of action plans that is required.
 - Any themes noted through consideration and sign-off of the Partnership Review
 - Any suggested actions for the university or changes to process
43. In addition, activity will be completed on an annual basis to review the public information published on all partners' webpages, not just those being considered via Partnership Review. This activity will be completed by International Relations for international partners and by Academic Registry for UK partners. This activity will be co-ordinated by Academic Registry, and a summary of this activity will be reported annually to AQSC.

Appendix 1



Once Partner Re-approval is confirmed, development and agreement of the new contract will be instigated, in line with the Academic Partnerships Operational Guidance.