



Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards Policy

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1. REVISION HISTORY AND APPROVAL

Revision	Nature of change	Approval	Date
1.0	First Issue	JL	27/07/21

2. DEFINITION

- 2.1. “Collaborative provision for the purpose of this document means two or more providers being involved by formal agreement in provision of a programme of higher education and training. There is a range of different forms of collaborative provision. There may be collaboration in the development of the programme, in the academic monitoring of the programme, in the teaching, in the assessment, etc. or a combination of any of these. (QQI, 2012, p. 10)
- 2.2. “Transnational [TN] education for the purpose of this document is the provision or partial provision of a programme of education in one country by a provider which is based in another country. A provider country is the country in which a provider is based. A receiver country is a country in which learners are based. There may be multiple receiver countries and for collaborative programmes there may be multiple provider countries. The statement of policy assumes that each provider has its main base in one country—the extension of the policy and criteria to the alternative case is obvious. The term ‘transnational’ for the purpose of this document may be construed as cross-border or cross-jurisdictional.” (QQI, 2012, p. 10).
- 2.3. Joint Awards refer to a partnership arrangement whereby two or more awarding bodies provide a programme leading to single award made jointly by both or all participants. (QAA, 2020).
- 2.4. For the purposes of this document, all references to Ireland refer to the Republic of Ireland.

3. SCOPE OF COLLABORATIVE, TRANSNATIONAL & JOINT AWARDS ARRANGEMENTS

- 3.1. The requirements of this policy apply to all programmes involving collaborative provision, transnational provision or joint award agreements.
- 3.2. PCI College may enter into one or more of the following transnational arrangements:
 - The delivery of validated programmes outside of Ireland.
 - The delivery of part of a validated programme outside of Ireland.
 - The development of a programme specifically for delivery outside of Ireland.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 4.1. PCI College will enter into the delivery of collaborative provision, transnational provision or joint awards only where:
 - The arrangement aligns to the College’s Mission, Vision and Values.
 - The arrangement aligns to the College’s strategic plan.
 - The arrangement fulfils the Colleges’ statutory obligations.
 - The arrangement is endorsed by the College Board and the Academic Council.
 - The arrangement is compliant with national and international legislative requirements.
 - The arrangement is compliant with relevant validating body’s policy, standards and procedures, for example, QQI’s policy for ‘Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards’.
 - The criteria for producing a Consortium Agreement for collaborative provision can be met
 - The arrangement is compliant with relevant accrediting body’s policy, standards and procedures, for example IACP, BACP, NCS competency standards.
 - Learning outcomes of the programme of study are informed by the appropriate validating body standard, for example, QQI:NFQ, MU:UK.
 - The interests of the learner is paramount in all transnational programme activity.
 - Enrolled learners are treated in a manner equivalent to learners on national and single award programmes.
 - There are appropriate physical and learning resources to support learners.

- Adequate protection of learners is in place.
- It is academically viable, see New Programme Development and Validation Procedure
- It is commercial viable, as determined by the College Board.

5. ESTABLISHMENT OF COLLABORATIVE PROVISION

- 5.1. The development and management of collaborative programme, transnational programme or joint award agreements from initial proposal to validation and provision must follow the PCI College New Programme Design, Development and Review Policy and Procedure, the Ongoing Programme Monitoring Policy and Procedure, the New Programme Evaluation and Revalidation Policy and Procedure and all existing QA strategies, including Assessment of Learners.
- 5.2. All collaborative programme, transnational programme or joint award agreement proposals must be reviewed and managed according to the New Programme Design, Development and Review Policy and Procedure in accordance with the information set out within this document, including the development of a Consortium Agreement where applicable.
- 5.3. Upon approval of the development of collaborative provision, a formal agreement between both providers must be put in place. This is known as a Consortium Agreement. The Consortium Agreement must outline all points within section 5 of this document.
- 5.4. The Academic Council will be involved in the approval of collaborative providers and the development of a Consortium Agreement in addition to the establishment of any collaborative arrangements.
- 5.5. Programmes of collaborative provision should be jointly developed where possible with each provider.
- 5.6. Each provider should have full and clear recognition of their responsibilities for the constituent parts of the collaborative provision.
- 5.7. Joint policy, procedures and criteria (in accordance with national/international and existing provider arrangements) should be established.
- 5.8. Entry requirements should be jointly agreed and upheld by all providers with recognition that learners need only apply for admission to a single programme with information for learners easily available from a single point.
- 5.9. Assessment criteria should be clear, explicit and recognised by both providers in accordance with the agreed assessment strategy.
- 5.10. RPL provisions must be agreed and honoured by both providers.
- 5.11. Agreement and review of all QA procedures.
- 5.12. All QA procedures for collaborative provision, including Consortium Agreements, must be approved by relevant validating body.
- 5.13. Learners should receive full disclosure in relation to:
 - 5.13.1. The providers of such collaborative provision
 - 5.13.2. The awarding body
 - 5.13.3. The validating body
 - 5.13.4. The accrediting body/accreditation status
 - 5.13.5. The award name and level
 - 5.13.6. Entry requirements including RPL arrangements
 - 5.13.7. Regulatory/statutory status
 - 5.13.8. The programme structure and intended learning outcomes
 - 5.13.9. College and Programme regulations and QA systems
 - 5.13.10. Information in relation to Protection of Enrolled Learners

6. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR DEVELOPMENT OF A CONSORTIUM AGREEMENT

- 6.1. There is a legal basis from which to do so.
- 6.2. All providers are of good academic and financial standing.

- 6.3. All providers have the necessary resources required.
- 6.4. Appropriate and transparent corporate governance arrangements for the provision of collaborative provision can safeguard against financial/academic impropriety, negligence and recklessness.
- 6.5. All points within Section 5 and 6 of this document can be met.
- 6.6. All points in Section 6 of the QQI Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards (2012) can be met.

7. GUIDELINES FOR THE CONSORTIUM AGREEMENT

- 7.1. The Consortium Agreement must include a Programme Agreement. The Programme Agreement links component parts of the programme as appropriate and identifies any arrangements which arise specifically as a result of the collaborative nature of the provision.
- 7.2. The Programme Agreement should consist of a number of sections and provides clear, transparent and detailed information for partners, learners, accreditation and validation bodies on at least each of the following:
 - Introduction
 - Overall structure of the programme
 - Prior learning and other admission requirements
 - Analysis of needs of target learners
 - Awarding body or bodies and including the necessary awarding agreements
 - Possible awards to be attained by learners
 - Intended Programme Learning Outcomes
 - Programme Assessment Strategy
 - Approved Programme Schedule
 - Responsibility for delivery
 - Location of delivery
 - Academic and other regulations governing the awards
 - Resource implications and the monitoring and oversight of resource effectiveness
 - Programme management
 - Specific QAE procedures governing the management and delivery of the proposed programme, e.g. scheduling, learner resources, support for learners, assessment
 - Special arrangements for complaints and/or appeals
- 7.3. In determining other issues for inclusion in the programme agreement the College shall comply with the guidelines in QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards 2012.

8. PCI COLLEGE TRANSNATIONAL STRATEGY

- 8.1. PCI College Transnational Strategy is developed in accordance with the College's 5-year Strategy.
- 8.2. The College Board is involved in the approval of transnational strategy and delegates responsibility for development and direct management of same via the associated QA systems, i.e. Academic Council, Head of Counselling and Psychotherapy, policies and procedures associated with programme design, development and ongoing monitoring.
- 8.3. PCI College delivers programmes in Belfast within the scope of the outlined transnational arrangements.
- 8.4. The Belfast location is the only transnational arrangement currently aligned to the College's 5-year strategy with no plans to expand this provision elsewhere.
- 8.5. The Belfast location is an established PCI Campus venue and falls under the same governance structure as that set out within the provider country and overall governance structure of PCI College.

- 8.6. The Belfast campus has an appointed PCI College Faculty Lecturer employed to work from this location as their primary venue and is available and accessible to learners for the duration of their studies. The Belfast Faculty Lecturer occupies the role of Academic Team Leader, providing support and quality assurance procedures to all Belfast based lecturers. The Belfast Faculty Lecturer reports to the Head of Counselling and Psychotherapy via their relevant Programme Leader.
- 8.7. Should a decision to expand into other locations be made at Board level, this policy will be revised appropriately.

9. ESTABLISHMENT OF A JOINT AWARD

- 9.1. As per Section 5 the establishment of all programme types from initial proposal to validation and provision must follow the PCI College New Programme Design, Development and Review Policy and Procedure, the Ongoing Programme Monitoring Policy and Procedure, the New Programme Evaluation and Revalidation Policy and Procedure and all existing QA strategies, including Assessment of Learners.
- 9.2. A programme designed for joint award must be appropriately authorised for that purpose.
- 9.3. The detailed specification of the standards, policy and criteria for joint accreditation and making joint awards must be established in a joint awarding agreement between the relevant validating body and the relevant authorities. The details for inclusion mirror that set out within the Consortium Agreement and are detailed within Section 6 of the QQI Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards (2012)
- 9.4. Only joint awards that are recognised as meeting the minimum programme standards as equal to the learning outcomes specified by the generic award standard for the relevant award type within the NFQ, or equivalent, will be considered as eligible.
- 9.5. All requirements for the establishment of joint awards as set by QQI (2013) and QAA (2020) will be applied to the establishment of a joint award within PCI College.

10. APPROVAL, REVIEW & MONITORING OF COLLABORATIVE PROVISION, TRANSNATIONAL PROVISION & JOINT AWARDS

- 10.1. Approval of collaborative provision, transnational provision and joint awards follow the PCI College New Programme Design and Validation and New Programme Evaluation and Revalidation Policies and Procedures. This includes assessing:
- Proposals for collaborative provision, transnational provision and joint awards
 - Market demand
 - Required and available resources, including learning environments and learner supports
 - Validating, regulatory and accrediting requirements
 - National benchmarks for assessment and award
 - National entry requirements as applicable
 - Arrangements for the protection of enrolled learners
 - Equity of resources/experiences as comparable to nationally enrolled learners
- 10.2. The above named policies and procedures outline the quality assurance systems in place to guide the College from the initial stage of identifying a potential collaborative, transnational, or joint award programme to validation of that programme, including comprehensive due diligence.
- 10.3. The above named policies and procedures equally apply to all programme models, including blended learning.
- 10.4. The above named policies and procedures detail the steps involved for all programmes from initial proposal to validation and revalidation stages, including seeking prior approval from validating bodies prior to progressing with the development of such a programme.
- 10.5. It is recognised that for QQI validated programmes, where QQI have formally approved QA procedures for transnational provision, PCI College will inform QQI of additional

programmes that are proposed under that scope prior to launching same and the required approval process will be initiated.

10.6. Monitoring and review of existing collaborative provision, transnational provision and joint awards follows the PCI College Ongoing Programme Monitoring Policies and Procedures.

These are in place in order to:

- Ensure that processes exist to collect and assess data for the purpose of programme improvement
- Ensure that programmes remain current and continue to meet stated aims
- Monitor the extent to which; learners meet intended programme learning outcomes and, the appropriateness of assessment mechanisms
- Contribute to the development of a quality culture in which all stakeholders are aware of their respective roles and that actions are taken to address programme improvements
- Position the monitoring of programmes within a framework of systematic periodic reviews.

11. QUALITY ASSURANCE

11.1. The quality assurance of collaborative provision, transnational provision and joint awards is carried out in accordance with all PCI College Quality Assurance policies and procedures.

11.2. Collaborative provision, transnational provision and joint awards are subject to all internal and external quality assurance arrangements as set out with the PCI College QA system.

11.3. These are as follows:

- Governance and Quality Assurance
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- Support for Learners
- Information and Data Protection
- Access, Transfer and Progression
- Assessment of Learners
- Self-evaluation and Monitoring
- Education and Training

11.4. PCI College is responsible for all provision carried out in its name and therefore must contain oversight of and a degree of responsibility for the following in relation to any collaborative provision or joint awards:

- 11.4.1. Arrangements for advertising and recruiting learners
- 11.4.2. Access, Transfer and Progression of Learners
- 11.4.3. Academic Staff involved with the programmes
- 11.4.4. Quality Assurance
- 11.4.5. Learner Assessment
- 11.4.6. Awards

12. EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS

12.1. In relation to Transnational Provision, consideration will be given to the relevant national quality assurance agencies in both provider and receiver countries.

12.2. Transnational arrangements will only be considered for countries who have appropriate agreements with the validating body in the provider country and the QA agency in the receiver country.

12.3. Input will be sought from the validating body in the establishment of such arrangements.

12.4. Considerable effort will be made to ensure that learner experience in the receiver country is on par with learner experience in the provider country. This will be assessed through the New Programme Design and Validation Procedures and the Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes Procedures.

- 12.5. PCI College Learner Support Policies and Procedures and Assessment of Learner Policies and Procedures are applicable to collaborative provision, transnational provision and joint awards.
- 12.6. Where there are differing requirements from external quality assurance agencies, for example an accrediting body, it is recognised that there may be occasions where changes are required to the way in which a programme is delivered, this will not effect the overall programme aims, learning outcomes or final award.
- 12.7. Information related to collaborative provision, transnational provision and joint awards will be included within Annual Monitoring Reports (AMR)
- 12.8. AMRs are disseminated to all validating and accrediting stakeholders
- 12.9. AMRs are stored in the PCI College CRM database.
- 12.10. Validating and accrediting body quality assurance visits to collaborative provision, transnational provision and joint award sites will be facilitated as required.

13. THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- 13.1. The learning environment for all collaborative provision, transnational provision and joint awards in terms of resources and staffing will be on par with the learning environment for all PCI College programmes and will be sufficient to help learners achieve required learning outcomes.
- 13.2. All resources and staff, including Associate Lecturers, will be subject to equivalent quality assurance and performance management policies and procedures in place across all college provision and in the original provider country in the case of transnational arrangements. This also includes policies and procedures related to the recruitment of academic staff.

14. PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

- 14.1. The Head of Counselling and Psychotherapy has overall responsibility for the programme management of collaborative provision, transnational provision and joint awards. Programme management is delegated to Programme Leaders and the relevant programme team (lecturers, module leaders, academic team leaders, student development and progression officers, clinical manager where those roles exist on those programmes).
- 14.2. For programmes of collaborative provision, the responsibility of the relevant providers will be clearly outlined within the Consortium Agreement.
- 14.3. Programme management for collaborative provision, transnational provision and joint awards is subject to PCI College policies and procedures including:
 - Annual programme reviews
 - Annual module reviews
 - Programme Voice Groups
 - Lecturer support and training

15. SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS

- 15.1. Learner Support collaborative provision, transnational provision and joint awards is subject to PCI College policies and procedures including:
 - Academic Writing
 - APA Referencing
 - Academic Libraries
 - Online Module Material
 - 'How To' Guidance for assessment completion
 - Mitigating circumstances
 - Extenuating circumstances
 - Progression Review Meetings
 - Disability support

- Programme Voice Groups
 - Clinical support
 - Complaints procedure
- 15.2. Student Services are the primary stakeholder responsible for all learners including those on collaborative, transnational and joint award programmes.
- 15.3. All learners have equal access to supports across the College as a whole.

16. ASSESSMENT

- 16.1. PCI College Assessment of Learners policies and procedures equally apply to collaborative provision, transnational provision and joint awards.

17. COMMUNICATION

- 17.1. All information relevant to collaborative provision, transnational provision and joint awards will be clearly displayed on all advertising materials. For existing transnational provision the college provides a dedicated UK website for the Belfast venue which clearly outlines:
- The programme for which the learner is applying
 - The awarding body
 - The level of award and its place on the relevant framework of qualifications
 - The validating body and validation status
 - The accrediting body (if applicable)
 - Accreditation requirements (if applicable)
 - Regulatory requirements (if applicable)
 - Entry requirements
 - Programme content and requirements
 - Access, transfer and progression requirements
 - The venue (including information related to requirements to spend time outside of the receiver country if applicable)
 - The programme timetable
- 17.2. The PCI College Marketing Department is responsible for ensuring all information is relevant, current, accurate and transparent to learners
- 17.3. Learners on collaborative, transnational and joint award programmes will have access to all communication and consultation channels that are available within PCI College.
- 17.4. Details related to collaborative provision, transnational provision and joint awards will be included on the main PCI College website.

18. ACCESS, TRANSFER AND PROGRESSION

- 18.1. The PCI College policies and procedures related to access, transfer and progression equally apply to all collaborative provision, transnational provision and joint awards and learners.
- 18.2. Where differences in relation to access, transfer and progression are required in relation to collaborative provision and joint awards, this will be clearly outlined within the Consortium Agreement and made available to learners.

19. PROTECTION OF LEARNERS

- 19.1. All collaborative provision, transnational provision and joint awards will have appropriate PEL arrangements in place. Sections 64-67 of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 will apply to such programmes.

20. LINKED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

<p>Linked Policies</p>	<p>Assessment of Learners Policy Ethical Guidelines for Assessors Policy New Programme Design, Development and Validation Policy Ongoing Programme Monitoring Policy Programme Assessment Strategy Policy Privacy Policy Data Collection, Information and Management Policy Revalidation Policy Staff Recruitment, Management and Development Policy Protection of Enrolled Learners: Support for Learners Policy PCI College Strategic Plan Teaching and Learning Strategy QA Management Policy</p>
<p>Linked Procedures</p>	<p>Assessment of Learners Procedure Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards Procedure New Programme Design, Development and Validation Procedure Ongoing Programme Monitoring Procedure Annual Programme Monitoring Procedure Annual Module Review Procedure Programme Assessment Strategy Procedure Data Collection, Information and Management Procedure Revalidation Procedure Staff Recruitment, Management and Development Policy Support for Learners Procedures</p>