

QUALITY ASSURANCE DOCUMENT QA 79 – RECOGNISED STUDY CENTRE PARTNER: APPROVAL, MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

Introduction and Definitions

The purpose of this document is to outline the approval, monitoring and review of arrangements where Arden University contracts with a partner to support part of a programme or provision. These procedures are aligned to the University's Regulatory Framework and the QAA UK Quality Code: Advice and Guidance; Partnerships, and ensures the University retains responsibility for academic standards and the quality of the student experience.

Recognised Study Centre Partner

A partner institution that is authorised to provide the infrastructure and study centre resources to students in the UK or overseas on Arden University programmes, which could include library and study facilities, local pastoral support, work based learning, study skills (inc. English language) and other local services. The University will retain full responsibility for academic delivery, content and assessment.

Approval Process

There are seven key stages (please see appendix 1) involved in the approval process for a *Recognised Study Centre Partner*, namely:

1. Partnership Proposal and Business Plan
2. Approval to proceed by Arden University Executive
3. Due Diligence and Institutional Approval by Partnership Committee
4. Collaborative Planning Group
5. Approval by Academic Board (or Collaborative Sub-Committee)
6. *Recognised Study Centre Partner Agreement*
7. Collaborative and Partnership Register

Stage 1. Partnership Proposal and Business Plan

The Partnership Proposal (please see appendix 2) will outline the basis for the arrangement, including the level of partner involvement, benefits and risks, financial opportunity and market analysis. The proposal will be initially considered by Arden University Executive to assess interest and general possibility of a partnership. The Partnership Proposal will be developed by the Pro Vice Chancellor Partnerships in consultation with relevant University stakeholders. A preliminary site visit may be conducted by University staff to develop a better understanding of the collaboration and develop initial confidence.

Stage 2. Approval to proceed by Arden University Executive

The Pro Vice Chancellor Partnerships with support from relevant academic lead(s) and Finance will develop a detailed Partnership Business Plan (please see appendix 3). Arden University Executive will be required to assess the business plan and rationale for the *Recognised Study Centre Partner* against the University's strategic aims and mission. The appropriateness of the proposal will be verified against initial costs, revenue and the perceived student experience. On approval to proceed from Arden University Executive, the proposal will be considered by the Partnership Committee for institutional approval.

Stage 3. Due Diligence and Institutional Approval by Partnership Committee

The Partnership Committee will be responsible for checking the suitability of the *Recognised Study Centre Partner* to provide the services they will be contracted for and identifying any possible risk prior to an agreement.

In conjunction with the Partnership Proposal and Business Plan, due diligence assessment via the *Recognised Study Centre Partner* Application Form (please see appendix 4) will aim to demonstrate the following points:

- appropriate professional standing of the *Recognised Study Centre Partner* and legal capacity to enter into an agreement with the University
- financial stability of the *Recognised Study Centre Partner* and assurance of registered status, ownership, and internal management arrangements. The *Recognised Study Centre Partner* must be a legal entity operating in accordance with the legal obligations pertaining to the country in which it operates
- identification of any business and/or ethical links that might pose a reputational risk to the University
- where applicable, the partner organisation's quality assurance track record with external regulators such as in-country bodies, Ofsted and/or QAA
- a review of the *Recognised study centre partner's* current and past partnership arrangements that may conflict with the University
- for international *Recognised study centre partners*, identification of in-country approval that may be required by the University
- the partner organisation's ability to comply with the University's requirements for safeguarding and the Prevent duty

The Partnerships Committee will authorise a formal site visit (please appendix 4) and also determine whether any subject specific specialist resources will require an external subject expert to be appointed.

The site visit will be undertaken by the Registrar (or nominee) or the Director of Student Experience and if required, a relevant Head of School. The site visit will consider:

- the suitability and capacity of the facilities, resources and premises to be used by Arden University students, including the provision of an appropriate and safe working environment for students
- the suitability of any student support services which will be utilised by students
- the partner's arrangements for managing and developing its facilities, resources and relevant support services
- the adequacy of any subject specialist learning resources, such as laboratories or specialist provision, where appropriate

The development of the *Recognised Study Centre Partner* due diligence, collation of supporting evidence and site visit will be co-ordinated by the Senior Quality Manager.

Where approval to proceed is granted by Partnership Committee, a Collaborative Planning Group will convene and consist of key individuals across Academic, Quality, Student Support and Commercial.

Stage 4. Collaborative Planning Group

The Collaborative Planning Group will assess and develop the operational requirements for a provision with a *Recognised Study Centre Partner* and undertake any further site visits (please see appendix 5). The Collaborative Planning Group will consider the following:

- an assessment of the additional delivery elements and support proposed by the partner
- the suitability of any learning resources and premises to be used by students, including the provision of an appropriate and safe working environment for students
- the academic and/or professional capacity of the partner organisation staff to deliver additional elements
- an understanding of the partner's arrangements for managing, developing and monitoring staff who would deliver additional elements
- the suitability of the learning environment and services provided to students
- the modification of student handbooks, induction processes and student feedback mechanisms
- the appropriate coverage of annual monitoring of *Recognised Study Centre Partner* within University processes

The operational plan will be presented to the Partnership Committee for institutional approval. The ongoing management of *Recognised Study Centre Partners* will be undertaken via the Collaborative Management Group.

Stage 5. Approval by Academic Board

A report on the institutional approval and collaborative planning from Partnership Committee, with any recommendations will be presented to Academic Board (or Collaborative Sub-Committee) for consideration and approval. Decisions on the approval of a new *Recognised Study Centre Partner* will be reported to the Senior Management Team and Academic Standards and Ethics Committee.

Stage 6. *Recognised Study Centre Partner* Agreement

Following approval from Academic Board (or Collaborative Sub-Committee) a formal agreement will be drawn up with the *Recognised Study Centre Partner*. Roles and responsibilities will be set out and agreed in a legally binding contract before any partnership commences. The agreement will include:

- a schedule of roles and responsibilities of both parties
- authorised delivery of additional elements
- financial details
- legal aspects
- termination arrangements to protect interest of students should the agreement need to end by either party

The *Recognised Study Centre Partner* agreement will be maintained by the General Legal Counsel.

Stage 7. Collaborative and Partnership Register

All signed *Recognised Study Centre Partner* agreements will be added to the University's Collaborative and Partnership Register. The Register will detail the start, end and review date of the *Recognised Study Centre Partner* agreement.

Monitoring Process

All *Recognised Study Centre Partner* arrangements will be monitored at two distinct levels: programme and partner. The programme level monitoring will be in accordance with the University's academic standard and quality assurance processes and overseen by the Academic Board (delegated to Quality and Standards Committee). The partner level review will be undertaken by the Partnership Committee to ensure continuous suitability of the arrangement.

The annual partner review will be undertaken to check a number of key elements of the partnership, including any report from the Collaborative Management Group; financial performance; student feedback; overall benefits; and consideration of any reputational changes.

The purpose of partner level review will be to:

- provide assurance that a *Recognised Study Centre Partner* continues to be a suitable partnership
- ensure currency of the *Recognised Study Centre Partner* agreement and address any needs identified via the review process
- assess strategic, financial and operational management of *Recognised Study Centre Partner* and manage any identified risk or if required, recommend termination of the agreement to Arden University Executive and Academic Board

The annual partner review will be undertaken at the Partnership Committee to ensure the *Recognised Study Centre Partner* arrangement sustains and delivers a high level student experience. The Partnership Committee will maintain a Partnership Risk Register to ensure effective identification and management of all associated risks. The annual partner review will be completed for the *Recognised Study Centre Partner* provision delivered in the previous year and co-ordinated by the Senior Quality Manager in consultation with the Pro Vice Chancellor Partnerships.

Termination by University

In the event the University decides to end a partnership with a *Recognised Study Centre Partner*, then the termination will be carried out in line with terms of the contract. In such cases termination can be actioned due to a variety of reasons (e.g. cost viability, monitoring concerns, change in strategic direction). The termination process may be initiated from any point of the management and governance structure but in all cases will be subject to approval by Arden University Executive and Academic Board.

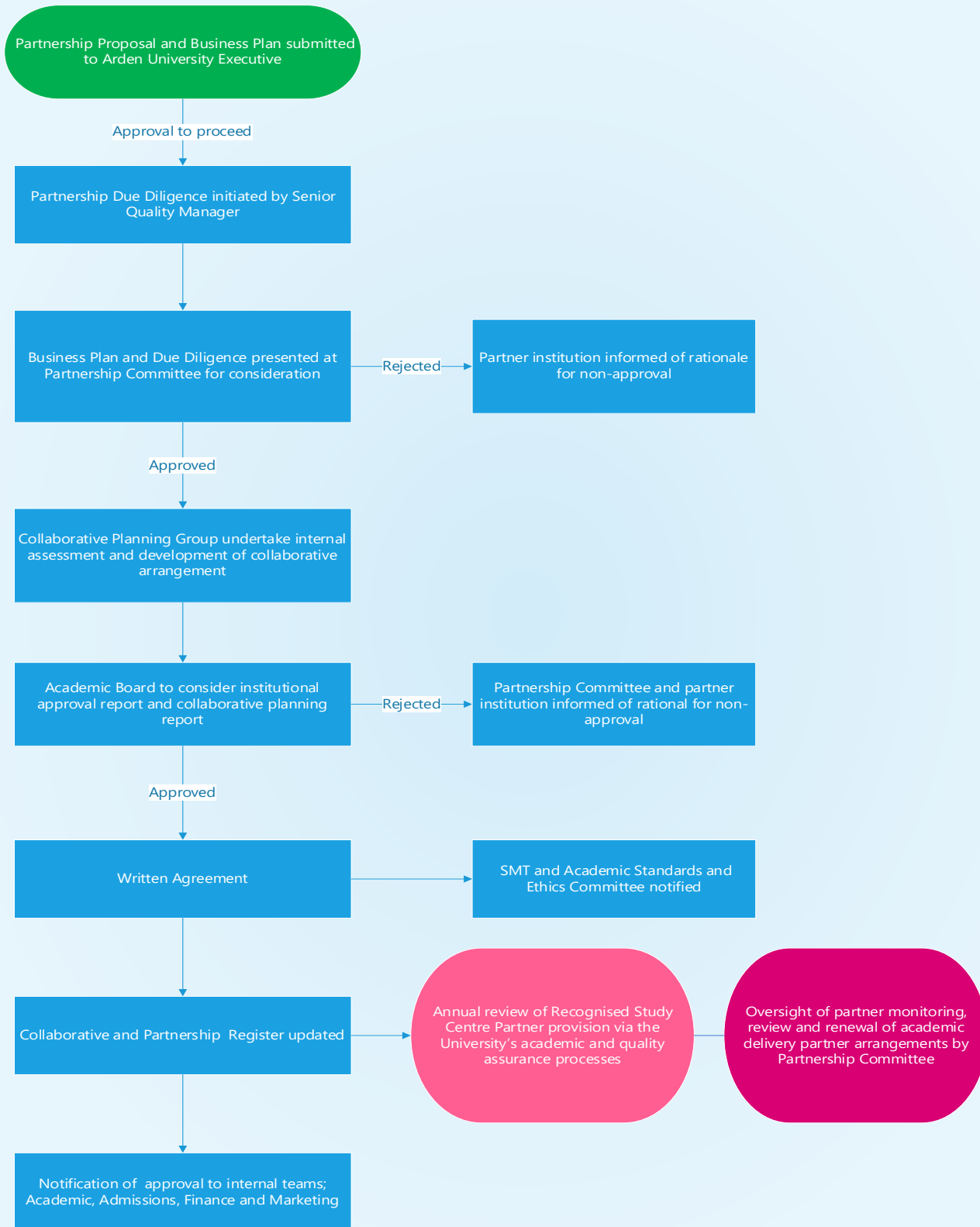
The termination process will ensure that the student experience is maintained and protected throughout the exit period, taking into account the obligations under the Student Protection Plan

On approval of termination from Arden University Executive and Academic Board, a meeting to confirm the termination decision will be held with the *Recognised Study Centre Partner*. A formal letter will set out details of termination and the *Recognised Study Centre Partner* will be removed from the Collaborative and Partnership Register.

Termination by *Recognised Study Centre Partner*

A partnership can be terminated by the *Recognised Study Centre Partner* but must comply with the terms of the contract and the University's Student Protection Plan. The *Recognised Study Centre Partner* will be advised to send a formal letter of termination with rationale for closure fully communicated. The University will advise the *Recognised Study Centre Partner* to continue working with the University to ensure students are protected throughout the exit period.

Appendix 1. Recognised Study Centre Partner Approval Process



Appendix 2.

Partnership Proposal Form

Name of Institution	
Country of Operation	
Primary Address of Institution	
Type of Organisation	
Type of Business Entity	
Business Registration Number	
Business Registration Date	
Company Website	
Primary Contact for Partnership	
Commercial lead for project on behalf of Arden University (name and position)	
Proposed Partnership Model	

Proposed Partner Opportunity:

Please include:

- Predicted student numbers for each programme for first 3- years (totals to be set out in next box)
- Evidence of market research undertaken to support the proposal and programmes
- Target market(s) and recruitment channels
- Competitor analysis

Overview of Partner Institution:

Please include:

- Short history of institution
- Nature of ownership
- Nature of activities (e.g. how long has it provided educational services etc)
- Operational area (e.g. does it operate in overseas markets)

Commercial Case:

Enrolment Targets for first 3-years

- Click here to enter text.
- Click here to enter text.
- Click here to enter text.

Fee Structure

- Click here to enter text.
- Click here to enter text.
- Click here to enter text.

Perceived Risks and Next Steps:

Proposal submitted by:

Name:

Position:

Signature:

Date: Click here to enter a date.

Executive Approver 1

Name:

Position: Choose an item.

Signature:

Date: Click here to enter a date.

Executive Approver 2

Name:

Position: Choose an item.

Signature:

Date: Click here to enter a date.

Appendix 3.

PARTNERSHIP BUSINESS PLAN

Proposal Overview

Who is the partner institution?	Click here to enter text
What type of partnership is this?	Choose an item.
What academic award(s) (if any) does this partnership involve?	Select an award. If more than one award, then please list all awards: Click here to enter text.
Is this an existing or new programme, variation on existing programme or replacement of existing programme?	Choose an item. If 'variation on existing course' or 'replacement of existing course', please describe requirements Click here to enter text.
Who is the University Lead for this partnership?	Click here to enter.
Please state what month and year the first students are expected to be recruited under this partnership?	Click or tap to enter a date.

Executive Summary

Proposal Benefits and Risks:

- Please describe the new partnership and explain what the potential benefits are and how you might measure this benefit?**

Possible benefits might include cost savings, increased revenue, improved student/staff experience, staff capacity savings/increased staff productivity/reduction in time taken to complete a process, staff upskilling/development, improved compliance with external bodies, and enhanced brand reputation with students/firms/regulators

Click here to enter

2. Please describe what the potential risks of launching this partnership are, and what the potential risks of not launching this partnership are?

[Click here to enter.](#)

3. Please list the people who have been consulted during the development of this Business Plan.

Name	Title	Document Section(s)

Market/Product Analysis:

4. Please summarise the proposition, including who the target students are and why students might choose to study this programme.

[Click here to enter.](#)

5. Please describe the market for this programme, including the size of the target market, any recent trends in this market, the key competitors and our likely market share. Please describe the assumptions made or evidence used to estimate our likely market share.

[Click here to enter.](#)

6. Please describe the fee and revenue sharing arrangement and describe the rationale used to reach these. You may wish to describe comparison versus existing partnership arrangements, competitor fee levels or target profit levels in light of the costs in the financial model. Please consult with Marketing and Finance as necessary.

[Click here to enter.](#)

Financial Analysis:

7. Please confirm that a detailed financial model has been completed in consultation with the Head of Corporate Finance.

Yes No

From your completed financial model, please complete the table (using the base case figures):

	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Number of students					
Revenue (£k)					
Gross Margin (£k)					
EBITDA (£k)					
Gross Margin (%)					
EBITDA (%)					
One off costs					

Arden University Executive Approval:

Approved by the Arden University Executive on:	Enter approval date
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Appendix 4.

Recognised Study Centre Partner Application Form

If your institution would like to be considered as a recognised partner working with Arden University, please provide the following information as a first step in identifying the opportunity. Please note that we will require additional information as part of the overall review of your institution’s proposal to provide relevant support for Arden University.

By completing this form and any subsequent application to become a Recognised Study Centre Partner, you understand and agree that Arden University is under no obligation to grant you such status. The preliminary discussions and the processing of this form and any subsequent application do not place Arden University under any obligation to enter into a legally binding agreement with you.

Information about the institution and centre seeking Recognised Study Centre Partner Status:

Legal name of the institution applying for recognition	Click here to enter text.
Trading name of institution applying for recognition (if different to that of the legal name)	Click here to enter text.
Registered office address of the institution applying for recognition	Click here to enter text.
Operational contact:	
Title	Click here to enter text.
First Name	Click here to enter text.
Family Name	Click here to enter text.
Job Title	Click here to enter text.
Email Address	Click here to enter text.
Telephone	Click here to enter text.
Academic Lead contact	
Title	Click here to enter text.
First Name	Click here to enter text.
Family Name	Click here to enter text.
Job Title	Click here to enter text.
Email Address	Click here to enter text.
Telephone	Click here to enter text.
Website URL	Click here to enter text.
Social Media	
Facebook	Click here to enter text.
Twitter	Click here to enter text.
Instagram	Click here to enter text.
YouTube	Click here to enter text.
LinkedIn	Click here to enter text.
Other	Click here to enter text.

Scope of recognition applied for:

Name and address of institution's Study Centre where additional non-academic teaching/or support will be provided	Arden University Programmes to be covered by recognition
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.

Overview of additional non-academic teaching and/or support to be provided:

Please provide a brief overview of non-academic teaching and/or support to be provided:

- *What support activities are proposed?*
- *Rationale for support activities*

Click here to enter text.

Overview of Institution

Please provide a brief overview of the institution seeking recognition including:

- *Short history of institution*
- *Nature of ownership*
- *Nature of activities (e.g. how long has your institution been providing educational services etc)*
- *Operational area (e.g. does your institution operate in overseas markets)*

Click here to enter text.

Business Proposal

Please provide a brief business case to include:

- *Predicted student numbers for each programme for the first three years*
- *Evidence of market research undertaken to support the proposal*
- *Target market(s) and recruitment channels*
- *Fee structure*
- *Competitor analysis*

Click here to enter text.

Criteria for granting Arden University Recognised Study Centre Partner Status

1a: Compliance		
<i>The institution seeking Recognised Study Centre Partner Status must demonstrate that they meet the following criteria</i>	<i>Please provide brief commentary for each criterion listed, explaining how the criterion is met and attach any necessary evidence</i>	<i>Ref. No of evidence provided</i>
<i>Does your institution have the legal regulatory permissions to operate in your jurisdictions and to offer support to Arden University students? Please provide copies of relevant documents.</i>		
<i>Does your institution comply with all relevant local trading licenses, insurance and health and safety obligations? Please provide copies of relevant documents.</i>		
<i>Does your institution comply with relevant local specific access policies and regulations? Please provide copies of relevant documents.</i>		
<i>What was your institution's revenue in the last financial year? Please provide copies of audited financial statements for the past three years.</i>		
<i>Does your institution own its own premises? Please provide copies of relevant documents.</i>		

Does your institution have contact with the British Council or other British government agencies?		
Does your institution have relationships with other universities/ education providers?		
Is your institution part of any higher education group?		
Does your institution feature in any authoritative ranking scheme?		

1b: Education Provision		Ref. No of evidence provided
Does your institution offer any Level 3 (Foundation, A Level, IB etc) courses of its own or from another institution? If so, please provide details.		
Does your institution offer any tertiary courses of its own or from another institution? If so, please provide details.		
Does your institution offer any higher education of its own or from another institution? If so, please provide details.		
Does your institution operate any Transnational Education (TNE) courses, programmes and/or projects ? If yes, please provide details.		

<p>Does your institution offer corporate/ professional training courses? If so, please provide further details.</p>		
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2: Academic management and administration		Ref. No of evidence provided
<p>Please provide details of your institution's governance and administrative structures, and decision-making processes.</p>		
<p>How many administrative and professional staff work at your institution?</p>	<p>Full time: Part time:</p>	
<p>How many academic staff work at your institution?</p>	<p>Full time: Part time:</p>	
<p>What contingency plans does your institution have in place to enable students to complete their study in the event of their programme ceasing?</p>		
<p>Please provide details of your wellbeing and counselling services for students.</p>		
<p>Please provide details of your student record-keeping procedures and the mechanisms you have in place to protect student data.</p>		
<p>Please provide details of the systems in place for timetabling and disseminating information about teaching and learning activities</p>		

<p><i>Does your institution have class attendance registers and mechanisms to improve attendance?</i></p>		
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3: Facilities		Ref. No of evidence provided
<p><i>How many classrooms, lecture theatres and learning spaces does your institution have (inc. seating capacity)?</i></p>		
<p><i>How many computer rooms (inc. seating capacity) and how many computers/laptops/tablets does your institution have for teaching and for student use?</i></p>		
<p><i>Please provide details of your institution's internet accessibility, inc. wifi availability, access hours, speed, reliability, fees/ charges etc.</i></p>		
<p><i>Please provide details of your institution's library (online or physical). Are there other library services or nearby facilities available for students?</i></p>		
<p><i>Please provide details of the recreational facilities available for staff and students. Are there other recreational facilities available nearby?</i></p>		
<p><i>What physical and technological infrastructure does your institution have in place to support staff and students with specific access requirements?</i></p>		

4: Staffing		Ref. No of evidence provided
<i>Please provide details (inc. modules/courses) of the staff to be involved in non-academic teaching on proposed Arden University programme(s).</i>		
<i>How many administrative/professional services staff will be supporting these programmes? Please include job titles and a staffing structure.</i>		
<i>Please provide the details of your proposed academic calendar, including: -term/semester dates -proposed start date for Arden University programme(s) -proposed face to face class contact hours</i>		
<i>Will your learners require English language support? If yes, please provide details.</i>		
<i>Please provide details of training and development opportunities for your staff.</i>		

5: Non-academic teaching and learning – where this is proposed to be delivered by the partner		Ref. No of evidence provided
<i>How will local non-academic teaching and learning activities (including feedback) meet the requirements of the Arden University programme(s)?</i>		
<i>What relevant information and</i>		

<i>resources will be available to help your institution undertake effective non-academic teaching?</i>		
<i>What support activities will promote individual learning and achievement, and enable students to meet subject or programme outcomes?</i>		
<i>How will your institution provide guidance and support on good academic practice?</i>		

6: Student experience		Ref. No of evidence provided
<i>How will your institution provide additional induction support activities to new students (including provision and relationship with Arden University)?</i>		
<i>Please provide further details on your institution's student enquiry process.</i>		
<i>Please provide further information on how your institution will provide clear information to students about:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -fees and refunds -administrative and non-academic support available -the complaints procedure -disciplinary matters 		
<i>Please provide further details on your student</i>		

<i>complaints procedure.</i>		
<i>Please provide details on how policies and student information is kept up-to-date.</i>		
<i>How will your institution provide students with training in the use of technology, including access to the relevant VLE and online library resources?</i>		

7: Quality assurance		Ref. No of evidence provided
<i>Please provide details of your quality assurance and evaluation processes (inc. student performance monitoring).</i>		
<i>What systems do you have in place to prevent occurrences of malpractice or maladministration in the development and delivery of provision?</i>		

8: Recruitment, marketing and publishing materials		Ref. No of evidence provided
<i>Please provide an overview of the demographic of learner your institution plans to recruit for Arden University. Please include details of target countries.</i>		
<i>Please provide details on how your institution will support students through the</i>		

<i>application and registration process.</i>		
<i>Please provide details on how your institution will market the Arden University programme(s) to its target audience(s).</i>		

Appendix 5.

PARTNERSHIP – SITE VISIT

1. PREMISES		
	Detail/Information	Action required
When was the premises built?		
How many floors does the Premises have?		
Does the premises have any on-site parking? Please provide details.	Choose an item. Additional comments:	
Can the premises be accessed via good public transport links? Please provide details.	Choose an item. Additional comments:	
Does the premises have a welcoming and accommodating reception area for students and visitors?	Choose an item. Additional comments:	
Does the premises have an access control system?	Choose an item. Additional comments:	
Does the premises provide an opportunity to support any University signage and branding – internally and/or externally?	Choose an item. Additional comments:	
Will the premises be shared with other parties? If so, please	Choose an item.	

provide details of all other parties, nature of business and number of staff and/or students involved.	Additional comments:	
Please provide details of furniture and equipment available in designated classrooms.		
What is the student number capacity of classrooms?		
What is the student number capacity of the centre and is this in line with the Business Plan expectations?		

2. FACILITIES

	Detail/Information	Action Required
Do students have access to a quiet area for study?	Choose an item. Additional comments:	
Do students have access to recreation space and facilities?	Choose an item. Additional comments:	
Do students have access to dining facilities either on the premises or nearby in a local restaurants or cafes?	Choose an item. Additional comments:	

3. STUDENT WELFARE		
	Detail/Information	Action Required
Will the Recognised Study Centre Partner offer any pastoral support to students? Please provide details.	Choose an item. Additional comments:	
Will the Recognised Study Centre Partner offer access to accommodation, financial, legal, employment or other advice to students? Please provide details.	Choose an item. Additional comments:	

4. LEARNING RESOURCES (inc. IT)		
	Detail/Information	Action Required
Does the premises have a library to offer students and will it be adequate to support proposed University programmes?	Choose an item. Additional comments:	
What IT resources does the premises have? Please outline number of printers and computer terminals, and the print facility which will be offered to staff and students.		
What internet services come into the building?		
Who is the internet provider? What is the capacity, and can this be shared?		

What is the internet connection speed?		
Is there wi-fi already available throughout the building which could provide guest connection for students?	Choose an item. Additional comments:	
Do classrooms have any audio-visual equipment?	Choose an item. Additional comments:	

5. HEALTH & SAFETY (all relevant certificates and policy documents should be appended to the completed form)

	Detail/Information	Action Required
Does the premises have a health and safety policy and is there evidence that it meets its legal obligation in this respect?	Choose an item. Additional comments:	
Does the premises have an appropriate number of fire extinguishers, fire marshals, emergency signage, emergency lighting, evacuation procedure and annual testing of evacuation procedures? Does it have appropriate certification to confirm the above as appropriate? Please provide details.	Choose an item. Additional comments:	
Are their periodic fire tests at the premises? Please provide details	Choose an item. Additional comments.	

Does the premises have adequate first aid arrangements including appropriate notices, first aid boxes and trained staff?	Choose an item. Additional comments:	
What training has the first aider(s) received? Do they receive regular training and updates? Please provide details.		
Is there evidence that the premises meet legal obligations in respect of disabled access, walkways, toilet facilities and evacuation procedures?	Choose an item. Additional comments:	
Does the premises have adequate flooring, lighting and heating? Is air conditioning available? Do windows require restrictors and are blinds available to address sunlight glare?	Choose an item. Additional comments:	
Does the premises have availability of drinking water? Is there regular testing of the water supply?	Choose an item. Additional comments:	
Does the premises have availability of security patrols and CCTV?	Choose an item. Additional comments:	
Has the premises been tested for asbestos?	Choose an item. Additional comments:	

<p>Is there regular PAT testing of electrical equipment?</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p> <p>Additional comments:</p>	
<p>What is the general condition of the premises, fittings and fixtures?</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>	
<p>Is there a named person with responsibility for ensuring health and safety at the Premises? If so, please state name and title.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p> <p>Additional comments:</p>	
<p>What qualifications does the person responsible for Health and Safety possess? Do they receive regular training and updates? Please provide details.</p>		

6. DEVELOPMENT OF RESOURCES AND SERVICES

<p>Please outline any plans for improving premises, service or facilities over the next 12-months.</p>	
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