

PROCEDURE FOR THE RECOGNITION OF PROGRESSION AGREEMENTS

Issue 9

Introduction

The purpose of this procedure is to enable the consideration and, where appropriate, approval for progression agreements that provide access for students from another institution to programmes of education and training for which University College Birmingham (UCB) has validated approval. The aim is to ensure the consistency of approach across curriculum and management areas and to optimise the effectiveness and efficiency of the approvals process. In all considerations for approval, the primary aim is to ensure that student entry characteristics are consistent with those of the relevant year of entry to the UCB programme. In assessing the appropriate qualification entry point into programmes at UCB, both the content and levelness of the partner qualifications must be ascertained and confirmed.

Aims

The prime purpose of entering into a progression agreement is to 'widen participation' through providing access to the UCB's programmes for students of another institution, usually where the institution has no similar provision, or where their programme does not lead to a 'standard' UK qualification.

UCB is not responsible for maintaining standards in the partner institution. However, it is important to ensure that the good name of UCB and its reputation for quality provision is not compromised by entering into an agreement with a provider of unsubstantiated ability to maintain the quality of its provision or of which the appropriate level of an international qualification has not been proven.

Responsibilities

UCB will provide applicant organisations with clear requirements for information to support a progression application and they must pass an assessment before approval can be considered for a progression agreement.

The Collaborative Provision Working Group (CPWG) will discuss the proposed partner progression agreement and agree action to verify its suitability and the academic standard of its qualification(s). The CPWG will receive and review annually a report on the progress of all Progression Agreements.

The International Office is responsible for the initial liaison with the potential partner, ascertaining its suitability as a progression partner institution and submitting the proposal to the CPWG. The proposal must include confirmation of the level of the international partner's qualification and the mapping to the relevant UCB programme and year.

Representatives of the Academic Management Team (AMT) are responsible for carrying out an evaluation of the curriculum and institutional profile of the proposed partner, and for carrying out an assessment visit where required. This assessment must include proof of the partner's

qualification level mapped against the requirements of the UK Quality Code and Framework for UK Qualifications.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (HE Curriculum and FE Principal) as Chair of the Validation and Approvals Committee, will agree the membership of the Validation and Approvals Committee and the protocol of the validation event.

The Academic Board, through its Validation and Approvals Committee is responsible for approving any proposal for a new, amended or re-validated progression arrangement.

If approval for the progression agreement is granted, a Progression Agreement will be drawn up between the partner institution and UCB stating the conditions of the agreement and the responsibilities of both institutions. The nature of the partnership will be explicitly stated in terms of which partner programmes are recognised for progression to the qualification and entry point of UCB programmes. This is drawn up by the International Office and checked and approved by the Validation and Approvals Committee.

Every Agreement will be subject to review and re-validation, as determined by the Validation and Approvals Committee.

An annual evaluation and status check of Partnerships and Progression Agreements will be made by the International Office and reported to the CPWG and the Accreditation Committee.

Procedure

1. Requests for consideration of a progression agreement may be made to the CPWG via the International Office.
2. The applying institution will be requested to provide documentary evidence to support their application (refer to the Annex of this procedure for the full information requirement).
3. The International Office will facilitate an analysis of the character, content and provision of the programmes proposed for recognition as providing access to UCB's programmes by a suitable member of UCB staff. This may include making a site visit wherever possible and particularly for potential overseas partners. The purpose of the analysis is to establish the extent to which any proposed programme matches the level, content and other requirements of the relevant UCB programme.
4. The standing of the institution offering the proposed programme will also be investigated using appropriate means.
5. A programme of another institution may be considered as an entry qualification to the start of a UCB programme, or it may be considered for entry to later stages of a UCB programme.

6. The proposed progression agreement will be reviewed by the CPWG who will agree any action needed to verify its suitability and academic standard of its qualifications. Once all requirements are in place, the CPWG may then refer the proposed progression agreement for consideration and final approval to the Validation and Approvals Committee of the Academic Board.
7. The Validation and Approvals Committee of the Academic Board, may make the following decisions concerning the proposed progression agreement:
 - i. That the agreement be approved.
 - ii. That the agreement be approved with either or both binding 'condition(s)' that must be addressed or 'recommendation(s)' that should be seriously considered in the interests of quality improvement.
 - iii. That the proposal is re-submitted at a future point.
 - iv. That the proposal is rejected
8. If the approval is given, a Progression Agreement will be issued by UCB and approved by the Chief Executives of both institutions. This will state the terms on which the agreement is approved and will clearly state the responsibilities of both institutions.
9. The approved agreement will be regularly reviewed, and where staff are visiting the location of the partner institution, this will include a site visit. Close monitoring of the progress of students from each partner institution is an important feature in the evaluation of the success or otherwise of the agreement. Progressing student performance will be included in the annual evaluation of Partnership Agreements.
10. Records relating to the process of validation and review will be held by the Quality Team.

ANNEX
Progression Agreement Recognition Requirements
Guidance to applicants

This Annex specifies the information requirements for the initial quality assessment of an institution applying for a progression agreement with UCB.

Information required from institutions to support an application for programme recognition for progression purposes:

1. Precise details of the programme(s) included in the proposal including:

- The title of the programme
- The aims and objectives of the programme
- The Unit/Module components with details of each including, teaching and learning hours, indicative content/syllabus, reading lists
- Marketing information (eg Prospectus)
- Confirmation of the level of the international qualification and UK equivalence.

2. Resources

- Information on general facilities such as teaching rooms, practical areas, recreation areas, the Library and the availability of Information Technology
- Information on the resources available for student learning on the programme
- Information on other learning resources to support the programme

3. Assessment

- Information on assessment strategies, including methods, and information which would enable a judgement to be made on the level of ability required on the programme for a 'pass' in relation to UCB standards of work.

4. Students

The profile of students on relevant programmes and trends in recruitment numbers.

5. Quality Assurance

- Including any government or other institutional recognition.
- Information on external moderation and quality assessments and reports, where relevant
- Details of any work experience or placement arrangements (where applicable)

6. Financial viability:

- Evidence of the Institution's ability to adequately resource and support their programmes

Where an initial quality assessment visit is required in addition to the satisfactory appraisal of the information stated above, UCB representatives will carry out the following additional quality assessment activities:

- a) Physical Resources
 - A tour and inspection of the programme specific and cross-college resources and facilities, including classrooms, learning environments and recreation facilities
- b) Equipment and Learning Resources
 - A tour and inspection of programme specific resources and equipment
 - An inspection of the Library facilities and resources
- c) Assessment
 - A review of representative samples of assessed student work
- d) Students
 - A private discussion with students
- e) Quality Assurance
 - To review arrangements for quality assurance.
 - Confirmation of partner qualification UK equivalence
- f) Programme Staff
 - To discuss with programme staff issues relating to recruitment and quality of teaching, learning and student support.

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