



Collaborative Provision Policy



Purpose

The purpose of this document is to state DCU's policy as it relates to collaborative provision, including key definitions, roles and responsibilities, and approval protocols, and to set out the key principles informing this policy.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff involved in preparing a collaborative provision proposal involving a single or multiple partner institutions. This document includes a statement of policy as it relates to collaborative provision more generally and provides a link to the Collaborative Provision Approval Protocols.

Within DCU, collaborative provision involves "a formal arrangement between a degree-awarding body and another organisation, most commonly another higher education provider, typically leading to an award of credit, or a qualification, from the degree-awarding body".

As such, collaborative provision at DCU ranges from standard agreements on work placements and exchange programmes, to complex arrangements for academic collaborations leading to joint awards, all of which lead to the awarding of credit by DCU and/or the partner institution(s), typically another higher education provider.

DCU has established approval protocols, which define each type of collaborative provision arrangement and indicate who is authorised to approve the formal agreement underpinning each type of arrangement. The level of approval required for each type of collaborative provision is appropriate to the associated risk and the level of due diligence required relative to the standing and reputation of the proposed partner institution(s).

Policy Statement (Key Principles)

DCU is responsible for the quality and standards of all provision leading to an award of credit or qualification(s) made in its name, wherever the delivery takes place.

The principles below underlie collaborative provision arrangements at DCU and are informed by and fully aligned with the University's *Principles of Collaboration, Partnership Approval Process* and *Signing Authority Policy and Appendix*.

DCU will choose to work with partner institutions that help the University to deliver on its mission, further its strategy and enhance its reputation, and will make the decision to partner by taking the specific academic, business, and strategic merits of each proposal into account.

1. DCU collaborative provision arrangements leading to an award of credit or a qualification will apply standards that are equivalent to and consistent with those applied to modules and programmes that are delivered in their entirety by the University.
2. DCU collaborative provision arrangements will ensure all quality assurance requirements are met in a manner that is consistent with the University's standing as



a Designated Awarding Body, in compliance with relevant legislation and any regulations and standards the University is subject to.

3. Where relevant, institutional and/or academic due diligence will be undertaken, which will be proportionate to the risk associated with the type of collaboration being proposed and the status of the prospective partner.

Joint, Double (Multiple) and Dual Awards

In the context of a collaborative provision arrangement where DCU enters into a joint programme that does not lead to a single award, its preference is that the resultant award will be a Joint Award, evidenced by a single parchment. DCU will consider entering into a collaborative provision arrangement leading to a Joint Award in contexts where:

- Such an arrangement would enhance the reputation and standing of the University.
- A formalised strategic partnership is already in place, which has been subject to general and academic due diligence and is underpinned by a Memorandum of Understanding at the institutional level that includes a commitment to exploring the establishment of joint awards.
- DCU would be favourably positioned for prestigious funding that is contingent on the issuing of joint awards with particular partner institution(s).
- Establishing joint awards would be a significant step in the process of developing or further enhancing a formalised partnership with a particular institution, in the context of an approved internationalisation strategy.

A collaborative provision agreement leading to a double (multiple) taught award will only be considered in the context of strategically significant joint programmes where differing legal, regulatory and/or quality assurance requirements are impossible to reconcile and/or constrain the issuing of a joint award by one or more partner institutions.

A formal arrangement between DCU and a partner institution to design and deliver a programme that leads to a Joint, Double (Multiple) or Dual Award is the most complex type of collaborative provision and poses unique risks to the University. Accordingly, in addition to the principles of collaborative provision set out above, the following principles apply specifically to collaborative provision arrangements for joint programmes that lead to joint, double (multiple) or dual awards.

1. The University will only consider this type of collaborative provision arrangement if it demonstrably aligns with and advances the University, Faculty and School strategic positions.
2. The University will only participate in this type of collaborative provision arrangement with partner institutions that possess specialist and/or complementary expertise and/or have an established record of excellence in the discipline area concerned.
3. DCU collaborative provision arrangements for joint programmes that lead to joint, double (multiple) or dual awards will apply standards that are equivalent to and



consistent with those applied to programmes that are delivered in their entirety by the University.

4. DCU collaborative provision arrangements for joint programmes that lead to joint, double (multiple) or dual awards will ensure all quality assurance requirements are met in a manner that is consistent with the University's standing as a Designated Awarding Body, in compliance with relevant legislation and any regulations and standards to which the University is subject.
5. DCU collaborative provision arrangements for joint programmes that lead to joint, double (multiple) or dual awards will ensure the quality of the student learning experience and related supports.
6. The University will only consider this type of collaborative provision arrangement if it enriches DCU's curricula by allowing for an academic offering that might not otherwise be possible.
7. The University will only consider an international collaborative provision arrangement of this type if it enhances the international reputation of DCU; strengthens strategic international research collaboration, where relevant; and potentially increases international student recruitment and provides DCU with access to markets to which it might not otherwise easily gain access to.

Any proposal for a joint programme that leads to a joint, double (multiple) or dual award will be subject to prior approval. Programme proposers require Faculty and Education Committee approval, in principle, before entering into an agreement to plan for a joint or double (multiple) award and in advance of any commitment being given to partners that DCU would enter into such a collaboration. This is to ensure adherence to the principles above, to ensure full realisation of the benefits associated with this type of collaborative provision arrangement and to ensure that each proposal warrants the whole of institution effort required to successfully realise a joint award. However, it is understood that the nature of collaborative provision and the contexts in which particular proposals might emerge can and will vary and, therefore, that a proposed collaboration may not necessarily adhere to all of the principles, all of the time.

Programme proposers require Faculty and Education Committee approval, in principle, before entering into an agreement to plan for a joint or double (multiple) award and in advance of any commitment being given to partners that DCU would enter into such a collaboration.

Definitions

The Collaborative Provision Protocols define each category of collaborative provision to which this policy applies. The following key definitions are central to understanding DCU's position as it relates to collaborative provision. These definitions apply equally to taught and research contexts.



Collaborative Programme

A programme that is underpinned by a formal arrangement between DCU and another organisation, most commonly another higher education provider, typically leading to an award of credit or qualification(s).

Joint Programme

An integrated programme that is jointly developed, delivered and assessed by DCU and one or more partner institutions leading to a single, joint or double (multiple) award. DCU will only enter into a “joint programme”, thus defined, where that programme leads to a major award.

Joint Award

An award that is made by DCU and one or more partner institutions on completion of a Joint Programme, evidenced by a single parchment.

Double (Multiple) Award

Two or more awards at the same level that are made separately by DCU and partner institution(s) on completion of a Joint Programme, and that are evidenced by individual parchments, perhaps one from each participating partner institution (or their awarding body).

Dual Award

Two individual awards, attesting the successful completion of two separate curricula, with potential overlap and efficiencies in course-taking, and, if more than one institution is involved, each institution is primarily responsible for its own award.

Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of staff associated with this policy are set out in the Collaborative Provision Approval Protocols. These roles include, but are limited to, Programme Chair, Head of School, Executive Dean, Dean of Graduate Studies, Dean of Teaching and Learning, and Vice-President Academic Affairs (Registrar).

Related Documentation

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the University’s:

- [Collaborative Provision Approval Protocols](#)
- [Joint Research Supervision and Awards in Collaboration with Other Institutions Policy](#)
- *Partnership Approval Process*
- *Principles of Collaboration*
- [Signing Authority Policy and Appendix](#)

Further information about collaborative provision can be found on the OVPAA website, including guidance and the associated documentation for staff preparing proposals for programmes of study involving single or multiple partner institutions that have to undergo the University approval process (validation and accreditation).



Contact

Any queries relating to collaborative provision should be directed, in the first instance, to the Academic Secretariat (academicsecretariat@dcu.ie) in the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed as required in order to ensure that the principles underlying collaborative provision are aligned with sectoral standards, staff duties are informed by practice and key terminology remains current and relevant to the business of the University.

Version Control

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