



University of
Staffordshire

CLOSURE OF A COLLABORATIVE ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIP

Quality Assurance and Enhancement
March 2025



Closure of a Collaborative Academic Partnership

Introduction

1. University of Staffordshire's quality framework is in place to ensure that all of its courses meet appropriate standards, provide current and coherent curricula and deliver a high-quality student learning experience and positive outcomes. The framework:
 - Supports the University's Academic Strategy and achievement of institutional KPIs.
 - Provides assurance of the quality and standard of the provision.
 - Facilitates quality enhancement.
 - Facilitates the assessment of risk, focusing attention where it is most required.
2. The policy and procedure for the closure of a collaborative academic partnership is a key component of this framework, enabling the University to effectively manage the closure of partnerships, where required, and ensure that any students affected by the closure are supported to complete their University of Staffordshire award. It applies to all collaborative academic partnerships, with the exception of apprenticeship subcontractors who are managed via the Subcontracting Policy.
3. The policy and procedure for the closure of a collaborative academic partnership is aligned with requirements derived from the Office for Students' Conditions of Registration and the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2023).
4. This policy and procedure only applies where an entire partnership is to be closed. Requests to close individual courses offered as part of an ongoing partnership should be dealt with in accordance with the University's Course Closure and Suspension Policy.

Reasons for Partnership Closure

5. The need to close a partnership may occur in one of the following scenarios:
 - 5.1 Closure of the partnership by the University of Staffordshire before the term of the collaborative agreement is complete.
 - 5.2 Non-renewal of the collaborative agreement when its term has expired. This may be by mutual agreement by both parties or because one provider does not wish to continue.
 - 5.3 Closure by the partner before the term of the collaborative agreement is complete.
6. The reasons for closure (whether initiated by the University or the partner) may be varied. Drivers may include financial matters; quality issues; changes in strategic direction at either provider; or a failure to recruit the planned student numbers.

Supporting Students to complete their studies following closure of a partnership

7. When a partnership is closed, students at that partner should be supported to complete their awards wherever possible. A partnership level teach-out plan will be developed by the Head of Collaborative Academic Partnerships in consultation with the relevant School(s) and individual course teach out plans will also be prepared by the relevant academic teams in line with the University's Course Closure and Suspension Policy. Partnership-level teach-out plans will be approved by University Partnerships Committee (UPC). Course level teach-out plans will be approved by the relevant School Academic Committee (SAC). Heads of Department are responsible for the implementation of teach-out plans for the courses in their Department. The Head of Collaborative Academic Partnerships is responsible for implementing the partnership level teach-out plan, in consultation with the relevant Executive Deans of Schools and Associate Dean Students. Teach out plans

will be monitored at least quarterly with an update provided by the Head of Collaborative Academic Partnerships to each UPC.

Approval of the closure of a partnership initiated by University of Staffordshire

8. Any proposals to terminate a partnership should be discussed with the relevant Executive Dean of School(s) and Head of Collaborative Academic Partnerships in the first instance. There should be a clear rationale, supported by evidence, for why partnership closure is required. The Head of Collaborative Academic Partnerships will consult the Chair of UPC as required.
9. Should the Executive Dean of School(s) and Head of Collaborative Academic Partnerships support the proposal to close the partnership, a Proposal to Close a Partnership form should be completed by the Head of Collaborative Academic Partnerships in consultation with the relevant School(s). This will provide information including the courses in approval; students numbers; rationale for closure; and any teach out implications.
10. The completed form, approved by the relevant Executive Dean of School(s) and the Head of Collaborative Academic Partnerships, should be submitted to UPC for consideration.
11. Should UPC approve the request to close the partnership, the proposal will be submitted to University Executive Board (UEB) for final approval. Where UPC does not approve a closure request, the committee will agree clear actions for how the issues raised, which had prompted the proposal, will be resolved and monitored.
12. Where UEB approves the closure of a partnership, this will be noted at UPC and Academic Board and the Head of Collaborative Academic Partnerships will inform the partner of the University's decision. The Head of Collaborative Academic Partnerships will work with the partner to prepare a partnership teach-out plan, for approval by UPC.
13. Quality and Enhancement Committee and relevant SACs will also be informed of the closure of the partnership so that teach out plans can be prepared and approved where needed.

Closure of a partnership initiated by the partner

14. UEB, Academic Board and UPC will be informed of any partnership closure that has been initiated by a partner. Following formal notification, the Head of Collaborative Academic Partnerships will work with the partner to prepare a partnership teach-out plan, for approval by UPC.
15. The Quality Enhancement Committee and relevant SACs will also be informed of the closure of the partnership so that course teach out plans can be monitored where appropriate.

Unexpected closure of a partner organisation

16. On rare occasions, a collaborative academic partner may close unexpectedly, posing significant risk to the students studying University of Staffordshire awards there. In such an instance, UEB, Academic Board and UPC will be informed of the closure and the Chair of UPC and Head of Collaborative Academic Partnerships will lead action to ensure that the students studying University awards are supported to complete in alignment with any contractual exit strategies as well as university policies and regulations including the Student Protection Plan. An action plan will be agreed for approval by UEB and noting at Academic Board and UPC. Progress against the plan will be monitored by UEB and UPC.

