



Associated Institution Policy

Purpose of Policy

This policy, and the associated Memorandum of Understanding and Memorandum of Agreement templates for Associated Institutions, aims to ensure that:

- The University has a standard, robust process for the nomination, approval and monitoring of Associated Institutions.
- The academic standards of the University of Edinburgh are maintained.
- Appropriate pastoral and academic support for students are considered and provided.
- The legal responsibilities of the University of Edinburgh are met.

Overview

The University recognises that collaboration offers value to the University, its staff and students. The University's Strategy 2030 articulates that we will enhance new partnerships locally, nationally and internationally, developing long-term productive partnerships and collaborations that deliver major benefits for society and augment the local and international standing of the University.

An Associated Institution is a non-commercial, non-degree awarding organisation with which the University collaborates to promote cooperation in teaching, research and service to the community by working together on activities and projects where there is alignment of strategy and objectives.

To be an Associated Institution, the partner needs to be of recognised standing, concerned with research and/or education, and be of a complementary nature to the University, with a compatible mission statement.

Scope: Mandatory Policy

This policy covers all Associated Institutions and applies to all Colleges and Schools involved with Associated Institutions.

Contact Officer	Susan Hunter	Academic Policy Officer	Susan.Hunter5@ed.ac.uk
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Document control

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Approving authority	Senate Quality Assurance Committee
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Consultation undertaken	Original consultation: Quality Assurance Committee, Colleges, Governance & Strategic Planning, International Office, the University Secretary; this synthesis of the superseded policies: REC, GaSP and the University Secretary's Office
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Section responsible for policy maintenance & review	Academic Services
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Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations	Collaborative Provision: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning/collaborative-activity/overview Taught Assessment and Research Assessment Regulations
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UK Quality Code	UK Quality Code: Partnerships
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Policies superseded by this policy	The Policy on Criteria for According Associated Institution Status and the Associated Institution Nomination, Approval and Monitoring Procedure
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Alternative format	If you require this document in an alternative format please email Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk or telephone 0131 651 4979.
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Associated Institution Policy

Definition

1. An Associated Institution (AI) is a non-commercial, non-degree awarding organisation with which the University collaborates to promote cooperation in teaching, research and service to the community by working together on activities and projects where there is alignment of strategy and objectives.
2. To be an Associated Institution, the partner needs to be of recognised standing, concerned with research and/or education, and be of a complementary nature to the University, with a compatible mission statement.

Roles and responsibilities

3. Collaboration with an Associated Institution includes a variety of activities:
 - Sharing information, experience and skills
 - Joint research and publication
 - Providing teaching or research supervision for a University of Edinburgh degree programme.
4. Depending on the activities, different regulatory frameworks apply, e.g. research collaboration protocol, relevant Memoranda of Understanding and Agreement, and the University's degree programme regulations¹. Information is available on the Collaborative Activity webpages.
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning/collaborative-activity

Criteria for Associated Institution status

5. Listed below are the academic and financial criteria against which an institution is judged to be accorded Associated Institution status.

Academic criteria

- a. The Institution should be a non-commercial, non-degree awarding body of recognised standing concerned with research and/or education, of a complementary nature to the University.
- b. The mission statement of the Institution must be compatible with that of the University.
- c. There should be mutual benefit for the University and the Associated Institution.
- d. The staff of the Associated Institution should normally engage in collaborative research and publication with University staff.
- e. The Associated Institution must meet the University's requirements under its policies of health and safety, and data protection.

¹ As an AI does not award degrees, all degrees programmes on which they collaborate, for example by supervising research students, are University of Edinburgh awards and go through the usual University approval routes.



Associated Institution Policy

- f. The Associated Institution and the University will have, or will enter into, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The MoU sets out the broad principles on which it is intended that the relationship will proceed, and helps guide and focus discussion regarding proposed specific collaborative activities. The MoU is not legally binding and specific activities and projects may be governed by formal, legally binding agreements between the University and the Associated Institution.
- g. Where an Associated Institution provides supervision of students registered in the University, the following conditions must apply:
 - i. the Associated Institution must meet the University's requirements for quality assurance;
 - ii. staff involved in supervision must be appropriately qualified and receive training from the University;
 - iii. accommodation and relevant equipment must be of a standard comparable to those in collaborating departments in the University;
 - iv. a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) setting out the arrangements for a collaborative PhD for each research student must be in place.

Financial criterion

- h. The Institution should be wholly financially independent of the University.

Financial implications

- 6. Where an Associated Institution contributes to the teaching of postgraduate courses, payment for such teaching services will be negotiated between the relevant School/College and that Institution; funding for such payments will be the responsibility of the School/College. Details will be included in the Schedule to the Memorandum of Agreement.

Nomination procedure

- 7. Associated Institutions are nominated by a School or College. A School/College lead person will be identified (normally the Head of the relevant School) to liaise with the Associated Institution and take responsibility for the nomination, any subsequent agreement and its monitoring. The lead is responsible for ensuring due diligence is carried out before submitting a nomination to the Senate Quality Assurance Committee. The lead is also responsible for ensuring that risk management and due diligence is performed in line with standard University procedures.

Due diligence

- 8. A College/School wishing to collaborate with a partner will perform the checks, including site visits, necessary for the University to endorse them as a partner and satisfy itself of the good standing and legal capacity of the partner.



Associated Institution Policy

- This might include: current/future world rankings or league tables; other indicators of quality at institutional or departmental level; compatibility with the University's mission and vision; governance and financial stability; and political sensitivities.
 - Since the Associated Institution (AI) is not a University, due diligence may need to be adapted as appropriate, and should be undertaken in more detail, ensuring that the AI
 - has the necessary academic expertise and capacity to deliver their contribution to the collaboration
 - has an effective management system suited to assuring the quality of research programmes;
 - offers an ethos and environment for research students appropriate to UK higher education and to the proposed collaboration;
 - has appropriate arrangements for monitoring the proficiency of its staff; and
 - where relevant, appropriate Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies are content with the proposed arrangements.
 - For International Partnerships staff should follow the Global Partnerships Policy. www.ed.ac.uk/about/edinburgh-global/partnerships/new-partnership
9. Due diligence must include a statement of rationale for any proposed collaboration which should link to the College's strategic plan. This statement will form part of a business case for programmes and other forms of collaboration. For collaborative programmes this will follow the established approach in the relevant College.

Nomination approval process

10. The Head of College, on behalf of the University Court, will be responsible for the process of considering the case for award of Associated Institution status, on the advice of the Virtual Collaborations Group (VCG) and Senate Quality Assurance Committee. The VCG will ensure the case meets the Associated Institution criteria, consulting relevant parties as appropriate, before consulting Senate Quality Assurance Committee for academic advice.
11. The College must support the business case for the Associated Institution nomination before submission to Senate Quality Assurance Committee.
12. When submitting a nomination to Senate Quality Assurance Committee, the business case should include
- the reasons for the nomination;
 - a brief description of how the institution meets the criteria for according Associated Institution status;
 - a summary of the key findings from due diligence;
 - risk management report;
 - the review period for monitoring the agreement and time limit to the agreement;
 - Supervisory arrangements, where relevant, should be included in the submission. Where staff at Associated Institutions will act as supervisors, they are required to attend University supervisor training sessions, as is required of University staff supervisors.



Associated Institution Policy

13. Under the University's Delegated Authority Schedule, only certain University office-holders have authority to sign MoUs and MoAs for collaborative programmes.

Memoranda and monitoring

14. The Memorandum of Understanding and any Memoranda of Agreement will be drawn up between the University and Associated Institution. Memoranda will be time-limited and subject to review².
15. The relevant School/College will determine and put in place appropriate and proportionate safeguards to manage the risks of the arrangements.
16. The Memoranda will be monitored by the relevant School/College to ensure that the Associated Institution continues to meet the criteria set out in this policy, and that it continues to meet due diligence and risk management checks and any additional conditions of the agreement. The University will also review its collaborative arrangements periodically, at strategic, operational and academic levels.
17. More information on collaborative provision and agreements, including template Memoranda and the Delegated Authority Schedule, is available on the Governance & Strategic Planning website:
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning/collaborative-activity

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² The AI MoU template includes a length of five years, which can be extended by agreement. The AI MoA template suggests a time limit of the length of the student's degree programme.