



Position Statement for UK and International Academic Partnerships

Introduction

This document is designed to support implementation of the University's Strategic Plan 2025-30, by providing a clear framework for the approval, development and renewal of educational partnerships. It applies to formal and substantial partnerships requiring contractual and sub contractual agreement between the University and another party.

This statement ensures that decisions about partnerships are grounded in strategic purpose, academic integrity, regulatory compliance and long-term institutional benefit.

Strategic Context

Guided by our values, anchored by our mission and compelled by our vision, the University's strategic identity is defined by a distinctive commitment to social purpose. Strategy 2030 sets out our ambition to be a confident, person-centred and forward-looking institution that advances opportunity, strengthens communities and delivers sector-leading outcomes in widening participation.

Partnerships are a core mechanism through which the University extends the reach and impact of its work. Through collaboration, we seek to:

- Apply our academic expertise at greater scale
- Contribute to social and economic prosperity
- Widen access to high-quality higher education
- Enhance research, knowledge exchange and innovation
- Respond imaginatively to regional, national and global challenges.

This position statement sits within the strategic architecture of Strategy 2030, under the Academic Portfolio Innovation Sub-Strategy, ensuring coherence in how the university grows and sustains its collaborative activity.



Strategic Aim

Every partnership the University approves, maintains or evolves makes a clear, demonstrable and valued contribution to the achievement of the University's Strategic Goals and supporting objectives.

In exploring and deciding upon new partnerships, evaluating the renewal of a partnership and enhancing an existing partnership, it is essential that the opportunities and impacts of the partnership include features, enabling the University to:

- Build on established academic expertise
- Support the development of emerging areas of academic strength
- Meet regional and/or national higher-level skills needs
- Deepen the impact of collaboration with key strategic partners
- Deliver social value for the communities we serve
- Expand institutional reach, influence and reputation
- Strengthen institutional sustainability
- Manage existing and emerging risks effectively

In evaluating new opportunities for growth through partnership, the University will ensure full alignment with its values, mission and vision and with regulatory requirements (nationally and internationally) as it seeks to serve the learning needs of an increasing number and diversity of students, now and in the future.

Regulatory Alignment and Risk Management

In line with the Office for Students (OfS) E10 condition on sub contractual partnerships, the University will:

- Ensure that all sub contractual arrangements have a clear strategic rationale
- Demonstrate that partnerships contribute positively to student outcomes, quality and standards
- Maintain robust oversight, due diligence and monitoring processes
- Ensure transparency of responsibilities, governance and reporting
- Evaluate the proportionality of risk relative to institutional benefit
- Take timely action where partnerships no longer align with strategic priorities or regulatory expectations

This approach ensures that partnership activity strengthens the University's academic integrity, reputation and regulatory compliance.



Commitment to Widening Participation

Consistent with Strategy 2030 and the University's Access and Participation Plan (APP), partnerships will be used to:

- Widen participation among under-represented groups
- Support progression pathways into higher education
- Enhance local and regional opportunity
- Contribute to social mobility and community transformation

Partnership proposals must articulate how they support the University's widening participation objectives and APP commitments.

Implementation and Review

This Position Statement will be used by academic and professional services teams, senior leadership and governance committees when assessing:

- New partnership proposals
- Renewal or extension of existing partnerships
- Changes to partnership scope or delivery
- The strategic value and performance of the partnership portfolio