

# P04 – Educational Partnerships Policy and Procedure



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## Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to set out the principles and processes which apply to the development of educational partnerships and aims to aid in the development of meaningful and successful engagements with external partners, without restricting the provision of a high quality learning experience for all students.

## Scope

This policy and procedure applies to:

- i) provision which leads to either a program or award of credit from ASMI in collaboration with an external partner
- ii) provision delivered by ASMI staff in a transnational context including arrangements with overseas partners
- iii) articulation arrangements
- iv) ASMI provision funded and partially delivered by an external organisation
- v) provision provided by an external partner which contributes to an ASMI award

## Principles

The following principles underpin the aims of ASMI's Educational Partnerships Policy and Procedure:

- i) to support the strategic aims and values of ASMI
- ii) to support, develop and sustain a number of high quality operations and partnerships to deliver excellence in teaching, training and engagement
- iii) that ASMI has ultimate responsibility for the quality, academic standards and student experience of any award granted in its name wherever these take place and whoever provides them
- iv) that the academic standards of an award involving an educational partnership should be equivalent to comparable awards/credit delivered by ASMI
- v) that the approach taken to the approval of a partnership should be proportionate to the level of risk, nature and level of complexity involved in the project.

## Developing an Educational Partnership

Staff embarking on a collaborative arrangement should not underestimate the time commitment required to develop a successful partnership. The most successful projects are those where on-going dialogue takes place with the proposed partner(s) to develop a common understanding of the respective operating environments and where each partner is fully aware and engaged with their respective roles and responsibilities.

## Support in Developing Partnerships

A range of support is available within ASMI to support the development of partnerships. Advice should be sought from the administration office at an early stage to aid in the development and assist in the identification and resolution of issues and to provide support and guidance for both the proposing staff member and the partner. Advice and guidance may include:

- i) funding opportunities and assistance in completing funding bids
- ii) costing and pricing
- iii) contractual advice
- iv) quality management
- v) licensing issues
- vi) IT requirements
- vii) admissions and enrolment
- viii) employment issues

Staff should ensure, for programs subject to professional, statutory or regulatory body approval or accreditation, that it is clear from the outset whether recognition of the program will be possible and what, if any, requirements or approval levels are required.

## Approval of a Partnership

The approval process is split into two main stages, initial approval to proceed and approval of the partnership. The exact nature of the process is dependent on the nature of the proposed link and the risk associated with the proposal.

### 1. Initial Proposal

The initial proposal should be submitted to the administration office at the early stage of your discussions with a partner in order for the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or delegate to make an informed judgement on the strategic fit of the proposal and to identify issues which can be addressed in the initial stages of development. The initial proposal shall contain the following information:

- i) proposed partner details
- ii) proposed start date and duration of the project
- iii) a brief summary of the project and the key objectives
- iv) up to three primary reasons for undertaking the project including the intended benefits, outputs and expected impact of the proposal
- v) ASMI's expected contribution
- vi) proposal participants, including particular participant involvement
- vii) intended project location and delivery methods including identification of responsible delivery partner
- viii) any identified evidence of the likelihood of a successful outcome
- ix) whether the proposal participants have the capacity, necessary qualifications and industry currency to fulfill the requirements of the partnership
- x) a list of envisaged indicative costs including but not limited to staff, equipment, materials, IT, travel
- xi) whether the proposal includes the opportunity for external funding or if internal funding is required, where seeking external funding provide details of funding arrangements, i.e. funding source, application deadlines

xii) whether ASMI will be required to pay any financial incentives

xiii) whether ASMI will be required to issue certification documentation and if so whether the program is on scope and the level of the qualification

The proposal may be initially considered by members of ASMI's administration office who may make comment and/or request additional evidence of support for the proposal.

The CEO or delegate will consider the proposal against the following criteria in order to make a judgement on whether the proposal should proceed to the next stage of development:

- there is an appropriate rationale for the proposed partnership
- the proposed partnership is consistent with ASMI's business strategy
- it would be appropriate to undertake the proposed partnership in view of ASMI's existing partnership arrangements and other commitments.

On receipt of approval the CEO or delegate will inform the proposer of the outcome and start discussions with the proposer on the recommended approval route and proposed timescale for the academic approval of the partnership.

## **2. Academic Approval of a Partnership**

The academic approval of any proposed partner is important to ensure that ASMI is working with partners who are appropriate in terms of reputation and fit with ASMI's vision and aims; in addition to ensuring that there is capacity to deliver academically on the partnership.

During the initial proposal stage initial due diligence will be undertaken of the partner and a decision taken on the level of risk associated with the partnership. Guidance will be provided on the process for the academic approval of the proposed partner(s) which may include more detailed due diligence procedures. Due diligence procedures shall take into account the following areas:

- i) the legal, financial and cultural aspects of working in a particular country to ensure that ASMI is in a position to meet any legal and regulatory national requirements.
- ii) the legal and financial status of the partner
- iii) the reputation and academic standing of the partner
- iv) the ability and capacity of the partner to deliver on the proposed partnership, in terms of staffing, resources and access to learning opportunities.

For partnerships deemed to be low risk the CEO or delegate will undertake the necessary due diligence to ensure that the criteria for approval of the partner are met. For those considered to be of higher risk, further due diligence procedures will be conducted. Examples of such partnerships would include:

- international partners where there is no existing working relationship with ASMI
- proposals for the delivery of a program at an academic level which the partner has no experience of
- types of delivery which are new to ASMI

### **2.1 Criteria for Approval**

The CEO or delegate will assess the appropriateness of the proposed partner taking into consideration the following:

- i) does the proposal support ASMI's strategies?
- ii) is the partner of an appropriate standing in the proposed subject area(s) for ASMI to collaborate with?
- iii) what is the legal status of the prospective partner and can they enter a legally binding contract with ASMI for the proposed project?
- iv) is the partner financially sound?

- v) has the partner had experience of delivering comparable programs at a similar level, or is capable of doing so?
- vi) does the partner have an acceptable record of partnership with other institutions?
- vii) does the partner have robust quality management procedures?
- viii) does the partner have appropriate access to resources (physical and staffing) to deliver the proposal?
- ix) does the partner provide an appropriate and safe working environment for students and staff?
- x) has the partner been subject to any allegations or convictions for fraud, bribery or corruption or have there been any suggestions that in the conduct of their business they have adopted practices that may run contrary to the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001
- xi) is there a reputational risk associated with the partnership (for example, the partner's business and ethical interests, the risk of being unable to deliver the project)? and, in the case of proposed international partnerships are there appropriate measures in place to ensure that there is a joint understanding of the current practices of higher education in each respective country and the capacity to address differences in cultures and expectation to ensure that the requirements of the arrangement can be met?

In cases of partnerships with private providers, non-educational or non-academic providers' in addition to the above further information will be required on the following:

- i) ownership, nature and financing of the proposed partner
- ii) the governance structure (to ensure that the academic and business decision making is separate).

## **2.2 Documentation to be Submitted for Approval of a Partner**

To aid the CEO in reaching a decision on the approval of a partner normally the following documents will be considered:

- i) approved initial proposal
- ii) partner details – *this should be developed in conjunction with the partner organisation and include information on its organisational structure, legal and financial status/position, and its quality management structures and resources.*
- iii) report of visits by program proposers as appropriate
- iv) evidence of support for the proposal from the Senior Management of the partner.
- v) draft business case (if available)
- vi) draft Memorandum of Understanding (if available)

The CEO may request additional information in order to make an informed judgement; this may include a visit (see Section 9) to the partner.

## **2.3 Site Visits to Partner Organisations**

Visits to proposed partner(s) may take place if they are deemed to be higher risk and will be triggered specifically by the following:

- i) where the partner has not previously delivered a program at the proposed level
- ii) where the partner is located geographically in an area where ASMI has no previous existing relationships
- iii) where ASMI is entering into a new type of provision

The visit will be undertaken by the CEO, who may select academic staff and/or members of the support services as necessary.

The visit will provide an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the framework within which the proposed partner operates and to further develop the relationship.

A visit report will be completed and made available to the proposers where necessary.

## **2.4 Registration of New Program Approval**

Timeframes for the registration of new program approval will vary on the type of educational partnership proposed and will be based upon the level of complexity, volume and risk involved in the program. In addition to standard criteria for approval, the partner's ability to deliver the academic program will be considered.

The CEO or delegate will consider the ability of the partner organisation(s) to deliver the program, in terms of infrastructure, learning support and staffing, taking into account the nature of the partnership and the evidence provided.

The following documentation will assist the CEO or delegate reach a decision on whether to approve registration of the program:

- i) initial proposal
- ii) partner details – *this should be developed in conjunction with the partner organisation and include information on its organisational structure, legal and financial status/position, and its quality management structures and resources.*
- iii) draft Memorandum of Agreement
- iv) report of visit to partner organisation
- v) resume's, qualifications and details of industry currency for staff from partner organisation teaching on the program, if relevant
- vi) program specification
- vii) program regulations / Training Package requirements
- viii) confirmation of any exemptions from ASMI's quality management framework
- ix) business case (where appropriate)
- x) any other information requested

Educational Partnerships programs will not normally be granted permission for early advertising. In exceptional circumstances this may be considered and must be approved by the CEO or delegate. The proposer of the new program in conjunction with the partner should provide evidence of the requirement.

On receipt of approval the CEO or delegate will inform the proposer of the outcome.

## **Changes to an Educational Partnership**

Partnerships change and develop over time and in order to simplify the process through which established collaborations can be enhanced the following procedures will be followed.

### **1. Addition of Program(s) with an Existing Partner in the Same Subject Area**

No additional partner approval will be required, however, depending on the nature of the partner and financial risk involved the CEO may be required to approve the business case for the proposal.

Where it is proposed to deliver an existing ASMI program in collaboration with an existing partner the proposer shall seek approval from the CEO and supply evidence of the partner's ability to meet the resourcing requirements.

Where it is proposed to develop a program which is not offered at ASMI the full registration of new program approval process (section 10) will be required.

## 2. Addition of Program(s) with an Existing Partner in a Different Subject Area

Where a partner has previously been approved for collaboration in a particular subject area and it is proposed to extend the relationship into other subjects the CEO or delegate will consider the appropriateness and academic ability of the partner in the new subject area.

Additionally depending on the nature of the partner and financial risk involved the CEO or delegate may be required to approve the business case for the proposal.

Where it is proposed to deliver an existing ASMI program in collaboration with an existing partner the proposer shall seek approval from the Chief Executive and supply evidence of the partner's ability to meet the resourcing requirements

Where it is proposed to develop a program which is not offered at ASMI the full registration of new program approval process (section 10) will be required

In all cases any changes to existing partnerships will require a change to the existing Memorandum of Agreement or the development of a new one and consultation at an early stage with the administration office should be undertaken.

Trainers/assessors shall ensure that where there are any changes to agreed services, learners are advised of the change(s) as soon as practicable.

### Memorandum of Understanding

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) must be completed and signed using the approved MOU template by both the organisation and the partner upon the approval of the partnership. Such agreements do not commit ASMI to specific activities and are not legally binding but are a useful tool to show commitment to the further development of the relationship with a partner organisation.

Contact should be made at an early stage with ASMI's administration office [admin@asmitraining.edu.au](mailto:admin@asmitraining.edu.au), to start the contractual agreement process with the partner.

Each educational partnership agreement will vary depending on the nature of the program, the roles and responsibilities and the location of the partner. The following list provides examples of the types of areas where discussion and negotiation with the partner may be required in order to develop a successful partnership agreement:

- i) regulatory requirements
- ii) publicity and marketing
- iii) recruitment and admissions
- iv) enrolment and registration
- v) information for students
- vi) discipline, complaints and appeals
- vii) assessment procedures
- viii) quality management
- ix) graduation, certification documentation and Records of Results
- x) language(s) of instruction and assessment
- xi) financial arrangements
- xii) legal arrangements
- xiii) data protection
- xiv) employment issues
- xv) staff development training
- xvi) health and safety

Until the agreement is finalised and signed by all authorised signatories the program or unit(s) of competency are not fully approved and students cannot be enrolled.

The original completed agreement is required to be submitted to the administration office as soon as reasonably practicable but before the commencement of the agreement.

The Director of Operations is responsible for notifying ASQA of any written agreement entered into for the delivery of services on its behalf within 30 calendar days of the agreement being entered into or prior to the obligations under the agreement taking effect, whichever occurs first and must notify ASQA of the cessation of an agreement within 30 calendar days of the agreement coming to an end.

The administration office shall add/update the details of the agreement in the Contracts Register.

## **Review and Monitoring of Educational Partnerships**

Trainers/assessors in conjunction with the Director of Operations shall develop and implement strategies for the revision and monitoring of educational partnerships that fall within the scope of their team.

Strategies shall include the development of a plan to determine suitable arrangement for monitoring/revision of the partner. Trainers/assessors shall consult with partners before the commencement of delivery to ensure plans are developed with the agreement of the partner and do not hinder their operations.

Trainers/assessors shall produce reports of their findings and present to management at the monthly team meetings.

Plans shall include but are not limited to:

- i) scheduling of observations
- ii) review of partners compliance with the MOU
- iii) review of any supervisory arrangements
- iv) review of compliance with ASMI's Policies and Procedures
- v) review of compliance with relevant legislative instruments and the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015.
- vi) inclusion of appropriate reporting based of scheduling

All new partnerships are subject to review after one year of operation by the Director of Operations which shall aim to highlight any particular issues the partnership faced and how these were addressed in order to share practice and enhance ASMI's understanding of such issues.

Detailed reports shall be developed annually and submitted to the CEO or delegate for consideration to identify any organisational issues or areas of good practice which could be shared with other partnerships. Reports shall include but are not limited to:

- i) feedback statistics, student, peer and supervisory
- ii) details of any instances that had a substantial impact with the partner (positive or negative)
- iii) where negative impacts are identified, the resolution of or strategies in development to rectify the matter
- iv) enrolment statistics
- v) student outcome statistics (graduate percentages)
- vi) student achievements

Any serious issues of concern which arise through any of the monitoring and review processes shall be reported to the CEO and may prompt a full review of the partnership.

## **Renewal of an Educational Partnership**

The renewal of an educational partnership is undertaken at least thirty days prior to the end of the agreement. A review may take place earlier if serious issues have been identified with the partnership.

The renewal of the agreement for the partnership is an integral part of the re-approval event and discussions with the partner and on any updates required to the legal agreement should begin at an early stage to allow the presentation of an agreed draft to the CEO.

The CEO will consider the following criteria in order to make a judgement on recommending renewal of the collaboration:

- i) whether the rationale for the collaboration remains valid
- ii) whether the collaboration remains aligned with ASMI's strategy and mission
- iii) whether the partner retains appropriate academic, financial and legal status
- iv) whether the collaboration has met and will continue to meet the appropriate academic standards and offer the appropriate learning, teaching and student experience
- v) whether the collaboration has operated in line with the terms outlined in the agreement
- vi) whether the business case remains valid

The CEO will seek a range of evidence from the administration office to evaluate whether the partnership has met the above criteria:

- i) annual monitoring reports
- ii) learning and teaching review or visit reports as appropriate
- iii) internal audit reports
- iv) student feedback
- v) self-evaluations from the organisation and partner on the operation of the partnership
- vi) business case
- vii) updated agreement

The CEO will make a determination as to whether the partnership will be renewed and notify the proposer of the outcome of decision.

## **Suspension and Termination of an Educational Partnership**

In cases where a staff member wishes to terminate or suspend an educational partnership, contact should be made at an early stage with the administration office for advice and guidance or seek approval to suspend or terminate agreement from the CEO.

The CEO shall take into consideration the factors involving the request for termination or suspension and make a determination as to whether the agreement:

- i) is terminated
- ii) suspended with reinstatement/rectification due date
- iii) stands as per original agreement

Where approval has been granted to terminate/suspend the agreement the administration office should follow the below procedures:

1. ASMI has an obligation to ensure that any student is able to complete the program of study on which they are enrolled. If students are currently registered for the program, determine suitable arrangements and notify



students of the change and how it will affect them. Where multiple arrangements exist seek advice as to preferable option.

2. Action any changes from above determinations
3. Evidence should be retained that the partner(s) have been consulted on the suspension/termination and that the student(s) have been notified/consulted on the change
4. On receipt of approval/notification the agreement shall be closed/updated in the Contracts Register and ASQA shall be notified of the cessation of the agreement (where applicable)

## Register of Educational Partnerships

The administration office is responsible for the maintenance of ASMI's Contracts Register.

## Related Documents

Templates and Registers	
T06	Memorandum of Understanding Template
R06	Contracts Register

## Document Amendments

Details	Version	Date
Initial document creation	1.0	24 <sup>th</sup> July 2018
Procedure review and update to conform to new template	2.0	18 <sup>th</sup> May 2018