

Partnership Arrangement Survey

Independent Higher Education (IHE) has partnered with Pinsent Masons to explore the shape of partnerships in the UK in a broad project that will look at the experiences of the teaching partner, awarding partner and students to lift the bonnet and see how it all works. The information you provide will be held by Pinsent Masons and shared with IHE for analysis. Responses will be anonymised, and we will use the information to inform a report for publication in 2024. No individual, provider or partnership will be identifiable in the published report. We may also share the fully anonymised data with selected trusted partners for non-commercial purposes.

We recommend this is completed by the individual in your organisation most familiar with contractual partnership arrangements. Estimated completion time is 10 minutes.

If you are unsure about any of the questions and would like some assistance, please email angela@ihe.ac.uk. Alternatively, if you would like your data removed after completing the survey, please contact Pinsent Masons at ruth.gingell@pinsentmasons.com

This survey will close on Friday 16 February 2024.

* Required

1. Please state your provider name*

*this will ensure we can identify any duplicate responses per provider. Responses will be anonymised. *

2. Are you regulated by any of these bodies?

- Office for Students (OfS)
- Scottish Funding Council (SFC)
- Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW)
- Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland
- None of the above

3. How many academic partnership* arrangements do you have in place?

*an academic partnership for this survey is a partnership between a teaching provider and a provider with Degree Awarding Powers or an FE College with awarding or funding powers. It is not a relationship with a body who operates purely as an accrediting organisation.

*

- Zero
- We only have international partnerships with overseas provision (TNE)
- 1-5
- 6-10
- 10+

N.B. If you answer 'Zero' or 'TNE only' to Question 3, please skip ahead to Question 33, which asks about any previous partnerships you may have had.

4. What types of UK based partnerships do you have? (Please note, definitions of 'franchise' and 'subcontract' are to be interpreted as the same for the purposes of this survey. Select all that apply.) *

Validation

Subcontract/Franchise

Joint Venture

Other

5. During 2021/22, how many students were: *

	< 250	251 - 500	501 - 1,000	1,001 - 2
A: Learning on a qualification awarded by you, but registered and taught by a partner provider	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B: Learning on a qualification awarded by you, registered with you, but were being taught by a partner provider	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C: Learning as part of a joint venture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D: Learning as part of another type of partnership arrangement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. If you selected option D above, please explain:

7. Select the options which best describe the courses you award/deliver with your partners currently? (Multiple choice. Select all that apply) *

- Pathway courses preparing students for degree level study
- Specialist subject provision (at any level of study)
- Short courses
- Flexible provision (at any level of study)
- Accelerated Degree Provision
- Certificates or Diplomas of Higher Education or equivalent (FHEQ 4/5; SCQF 7/8)
- Foundation Degrees
- Undergraduate Degrees (FHEQ 6; SCQF 9/10)
- Masters Degrees (FHEQ 7; SCQF 11)
- Research Degrees (FHEQ 8; SCQF 12)
- Online course (at any level of study)
- Other

8. How long have you been delivering education through a partnership model? *

- Less than 5 years
- 5 - 10 years
- More than 10 years

9. What are your top 3 strategic aims for domestic partnership delivery? (select up to three) *

Please select at most 3 options.

- Widening participation
- Supporting local provision
- Creating new apprenticeships
- Creating new level 4/5 provision
- Creating pathways to undergraduate or postgraduate programmes
- Creating degree top-up programmes
- To innovate/create something new with a partner
- To deliver a new subject area
- To deliver international pathway programmes with partners in the UK
- Increase revenue from student fees
- Other

10. What is the process in your institution for prospective partners looking to partner with you? (Multiple choice. Select all that apply) *

- We have a central point for partners to approach us
- Individual departments or faculties are the first point of contact
- We have an open call for partners which specifies what we are looking for
- We publish a process for partners to follow if they would like a partnership
- Other

11. When creating a new partnership, what are your expectations for how long it should take to deliver (from initial approach to enrolling the first students)? *

Less than a year

1-2 years

Up to 3 years

Other

12. What factors do you consider about a prospective partner in the initial stages of forming a new partnership? (Multiple choice. Select all that apply) *

OfS/funding council registration

Existing data on continuation, completion, progression

Track record of delivering with partner(s)

Track record of delivering level of provision (UG/PG)

Number of existing partners

Partner motivations for new partnership

Overall mission/vision

Ownership/governance structure

Planned or current student demographic

Facilities/capacity to deliver proposed partner courses

Other

13. Do you strategically restrict your partnerships in any way? (Multiple choice. Select all that apply) *

- No – we do not use restrictions
- Yes - we do not allow our partners to have other partners
- Yes - partners must obtain our consent to contract with a new partner
- Yes - we only partner with one provider in a specific subject/course
- Yes - we only create partnerships in the same region as us
- Yes - we do not create partnerships in the same region as us
- Other

14. What is your standard length of contract? *

- We do not have a standard length of contract
- Less than 3 years
- 3-5 years
- 6 years or more
- Other

15. Is it standard for your contracts to include minimum or maximum student number clauses? (Select the response that best reflects your contracts across your partners)

- We never include minimum or maximum student numbers in our contracts
- We do not have a standard model for student number clauses in our contracts, each partner is different
- It is standard to set minimum student numbers for our partners
- It is standard to set maximum student numbers for our partner

16. How frequently do you review your partnership strategy? *

- Annually
- Every 2 or 3 years
- Every 4 or 5 years
- Every 6+ years
- We do not review our partnerships at a strategic level
- Other

17. Over the past three years, have the fees you charge your partners changed? *

- Yes - fees have gone up
- Yes - fees have gone down
- No - fees have stayed the same
- We have not had a standard approach for fee changes across our partners

18. Looking across your partnerships how do you discharge your responsibility for academic quality? (Multiple choice. Select all that apply) *

- Attendance at exam board
- Ownership of external examiner processes
- Regular validation exercises
- Joint or role on partner's academic management body/governance
- Audit rights/spot checks
- Named partnership manager
- Invitations to learning & teaching conferences, or similar
- Attendance at partner's academic committees
- Sign off on RPL in admissions
- Interviews with students
- Approving new staff
- We apply a developmental approach, based on the changing maturity of the partnership
- Unsure
- Other

19. What additional support structures do you offer your partners to develop their capacity to deliver high quality provision? E.g. partnership forums/conferences, Degree Awarding Powers application support, improving quality, admissions support marketing & recruitment, etc. *

20. Do you include a data-sharing arrangement as a standard clause in your partnership contracts? *

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

21. What is your preferred strategy for managing complaints and appeals in partnerships? *

- We prefer our partners to be responsible for investigating all complaints and appeals about any aspect of provision, with a final review or appeal stage to us
- We prefer to carry out an investigation of all complaints and appeals about any aspect of provision entirely under our own complaints and appeals processes
- We prefer our partners to carry out the investigation of complaints and appeals about non-academic matters, but to carry out the investigation of complaints about academic matters under our own complaints and appeals processes
- We prefer our partners to be responsible for investigating all complaints and appeals about any aspect of provision, with a final review or appeal stage to us ONLY for academic matters. Non-academic matters are closed by our partner
- Every partnership is different and we don't have a preferential model
- We work with partners to develop an integrated process
- Processes differ between validated and franchised (sub-contracted) partners
- Unsure
- Other

22. Do you require partners to provide a formal regular report about complaints and appeals *

- Yes - annually
- Yes - per case
- Yes - on a frequent cycle, but not annually
- No
- Unsure

23. If you have previous partnerships which have ended, what were the reasons for this? (Optional. Select all that apply)

- Partner gained their own Degree Awarding Powers
- Institutional decisions of the partner were at odds with your vision and mission
- Changes in senior leadership at the teaching partner
- Changes in strategic direction within your institution
- Concerns in quality of teaching delivery
- Loss of regulatory registration (OfS/SFC/HEFCW/Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland)
- Competition concerns
- Other
- N/A

24. The Future - Are you looking for new partners for delivery in the UK? *

- No- we are not looking for new partnerships at this time
- No - we are winding down our current partnerships
- Yes - we are open to new approaches
- Yes – we are actively seeking new partners

25. If you answered 'yes' above, select the options which best describe the courses you are seeking or open to awarding in the future.

- Pathway courses preparing students for degree level study
- Specialist subject provision (at any level of study)
- Short courses
- Flexible provision (at any level of study)
- Accelerated Degree Provision
- Higher Technical Qualifications
- Certificates or Diplomas of Higher Education or equivalent (FHEQ 4/5; SCQF 7/8)
- Foundation Degrees
- Undergraduate Degrees (FHEQ 6; SCQF 9/10)
- Masters Degrees (FHEQ 7; SCQF 11)
- Research Degrees (FHEQ 8; SCQF 12)
- Online course (at any level of study)
- Other

26. Do you plan to strategically reduce the number of partners within the next 5 years? *

Yes

No

Unsure

27. Has the implementation of the Higher Education and Research Act (2017), the creation of the Office for Students and the implementation of the new OfS B conditions changed the way you work with partners? If yes, please explain what you have changed. *

28. What value do you feel academic partnerships add to UK Higher Education? *

29. Do you plan to create new partnerships, expand existing partnerships or change the way you manage risk in partnerships to take advantage of more flexible course funding under the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE)? *

30. Would you be interested in joining a directory (updated regularly) of degree awarding bodies who are open to new partnerships? *

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

31. Thinking across your partnerships, how would you describe your partners? (select all that apply) *

- Collaborators
- Enablers
- Competitors
- Developers
- Innovators
- Critical friends
- Other

32. Is there anything more you would like to share about academic partnerships?

N.B. If you have answered Questions 4 through 32, you will not be asked to answer Questions 33 through 39.

33. If you have previous partnerships which have ended, what were the reasons for this? (Optional. Select all that apply)

- Partner gained their own Degree Awarding Powers
- Institutional decisions of the partner were at odds with your vision and mission
- Changes in senior leadership at the teaching partner
- Changes in strategic direction within your institution
- Concerns in quality of teaching delivery/loss of regulatory registration (OfS/SFC/HEFCW /Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland)
- Competition concerns
- N/A
- Other

34. Are you looking for new partners for delivery in the UK? *

- No- we are not looking for new partnerships at this time
- No - we are winding down our current partnerships
- Yes - we are open to new approaches
- Yes – we are actively seeking new partners

35. If you answered 'no' above, what has motivated your decision?

36. Has the implementation of the Higher Education and Research Act (2017), the creation of the Office for Students and the implementation of the new OfS B conditions influenced your decision above? Why? *

37. What value do you feel academic partnerships add to UK Higher Education? *

38. Would you be interested in joining a directory (updated regularly) of degree awarding bodies who are open to new partnerships? *

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

39. Is there anything more you would like to share about academic partnerships?

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