University of Reading

Annex 6: Standard Template for Business Proposal

Whilst this template raises a significant number of questions and issues to consider, not all of these will be relevant for every programme, and they have been provided to highlight possible issues as guidance. It is important to note that the Business Proposal should be proportional to the complexity of the proposed programme. The Teaching and Learning Dean will indicate the scale of the proposal required.

For each question please explain how the conclusions have been reached - what evidence was drawn on and what factors were taken into consideration.

As well as filling in the sections by answering the questions, please also provide a short financial summary drawing directly from the information outlined in the main body of the proposal.

Please consult the relevant TLD and Finance Business Partner, for their review and comments, upon completion of the draft Business Proposal.

Section 1:

Coversheet

Executive Summary
- The executive summary expresses the whole business proposal succinctly in one or two pages and should be written last.
- Include your key objectives and a time frame if appropriate and some of the key financial information.

Section 2: Introduction

- What do you want to do? - Type of award, subject area
- Why do you want to do it? - Where did the idea come from? Why this? Why now?
- What is the context? - at Reading/national/international
- Who is going to do it? – School(s), Faculty(s), key staff
- How are you going to do it? – FT/PT/Blended, working with a partner
- When are you going to do it? – first cohort start date , implementation timeline

> Partnerships only:
> - With whom are you going to do it? – Who is your partner? Why choose them? Is there a MoU in place? What is the structure of the programme? For programmes delivered with a partner, please reference the University's typology of academic partnerships which can be found here in Section 11 c:
>   http://www.reading.ac.uk/cqsd/QualityAssurance/PoliciesandProcedures/cqsd-PoliciesandProcedures.aspx
> - For programmes which involve delivery with a partner, if a partnership visit has taken place, how have the outcomes of the Partnership Visit shaped this proposal?

Section 3: General Analysis

A - Strategic fit

How does the programme fit with:
- The School Operating Plan?
- School's – and related areas - current offering?
- University's Teaching and Learning Enhancement Priorities?
- The outcomes of the School Planning and Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (SPELT)?
- Internationalisation Strategy?

Explain where the student numbers come from
- Increase in recruitment target?
- Re-allocation from discontinued programme? – which?
- Swapped from another programme?

What are your long term plans for programme? Size, scope, fit, *(partnership)* with future offerings?

B - Resources

Human
- Do you already have appropriately skilled **academic**, **pastoral** and **administrative** support staff to deliver this programme within your School or Department? If not, please specify the different or extra requirements.
    - You will need to consider time and personnel to handle all aspects of the programme: marketing, recruitment, admissions, administration, travel time, teaching, assessment etc. There may also be travel and accommodation costs (in particular for programmes operating off campus or internationally)
- Will the programme require different or extra-resources from beyond your School or Department? *e.g.* from
    - another School – the relevant SDTL should be consulted in the first instance and will be required to sign the Form 1
    - Faculty Office or central service
    - English language support
    - Library
    - ITS
    - Study Advice/Study Skills sessions
- Will there be any travel/accommodation costs for these staff, *e.g.* for distance learning programmes, informal or review visits to partner?
- Will extra or additional staff training and development opportunities be required? Have you consulted the Centre for Quality Support and Development?

Teaching, Learning and other Facilities (some questions will only be relevant for programmes delivered on campus or off campus without a partner)
- What physical space will you need to deliver the programme? Does this differ to or is it in addition to physical resources you already have? (*e.g.* classrooms, labs or other special facilities)
- Will the delivery of the programme require the purchase of different or additional equipment? (*e.g.* lab equipment)

- Have you consulted the RISIS Office? For some non-standard programmes it will be important to consult the RISIS Office at an early stage of the planning process regarding the creation of course codes.
- Have you consulted the Central Room Bookings and Timetabling Office? Proposers should consider how the development of the new Programme will impact existing timetables. If the programme is going to require additional resource, particularly regarding teaching space, the Central Room Booking and Timetabling Office must be consulted to ensure the resource is available.
- Have you completed the form at the below link to inform the Library and IT Services of the new programme? http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/its/help/its-help-forms/depnewcourse.aspx
- Have you consulted the Library regarding the new programme? The Library will need to be made aware of any different or extra resources the programme will require.
- What will be the IT requirements of the programme? Have you consulted IT Services?
- What are the e-learning requirements of the programme? Have you consulted the Centre for Quality Support and Development?
- For programmes involving delivery with a partner, proposers must consult the *Guidelines on the provision of information and IT learning resources for students on programmes delivered with an academic partner,* document 11d http://www.reading.ac.uk/cqsd/QualityAssurance/PoliciesandProcedures/cqsd-PoliciesandProcedures.aspx
  Following on from these discussions, Proposers must indicate which category of provision the proposed programme falls within.
- Have you consulted CPEC? You will need to complete the following form http://www.careers.rdg.ac.uk/staff/newcourse.asp
- Will extra places in on-campus accommodation be required? Have you consulted the University Lettings Officer?
- Will students only be on campus for part of the year? *N.B.* The University is liable for accommodation fees for all lets that become void part way through the academic year.
- What support will there be for students with disabilities? You will need to consider issues relating to disabled students' access to placement opportunities and special arrangements for students with specific learning difficulties including dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia and AD(H)D.

Risk Analysis
- What would be the implications if 10% or 20% fewer or more students were accepted on the programme? (consider factors such as allocation of personal tutors, timetabling, financial viability etc.)
- Are there any other factors of change are on the horizon? What would their impact be?
- For programmes delivered with a partner, what is the exit strategy if the partnership were required to terminate quickly?[1]

Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions
- Have you consulted the Student Recruitment and Outreach Office and especially in relation to the timing of recruitment for a new Programme?
- Have you consulted with Marketing, who can provide support in domestic and international market analysis for the proposal?
- Have you consulted with Reading International Office with a view to overseas recruitment?

---

[1] The University will be responsible for ensuring that students admitted to a programme who wish to complete it under their awarding authority can do so in the event that a delivery organisation or support provider or partner withdraws from an arrangement or that the degree-awarding body decides to terminate an arrangement.

- Have you consulted the Admissions Office?

Market environment:
- Do other Universities in the UK and internationally (if competition is global) offer the same or similar courses? How successful are they? Why are they successful or unsuccessful?
- Who are your main competitors? What do they offer which is comparable?
- Is there a unique selling point of the programme? What makes it different?
- If it appears to be an entirely novel venture, why hasn't this been undertaken before?
- What evidence do you have that there is demand for the programme?
- Is the demand likely to continue/decline/increase in the future?

Entry tariff, student numbers and tuition fees:
- What will be the entry tariff for the programme? Why?
- For programmes to be delivered with a partner:
  - how does the entry tariff take into account the different entry qualifications which students from different countries may offer?
  - what will be the English language requirements for entry to the programme?
  - what are the arrangements for the Assessment of Prior (Experiential) Learning?
  - Particularly for jointly-awarded degrees, what will be the arrangements for admitting students who do not meet the agreed common admission standard?
- What proportion of students do you expect to be home or international fee payers? Why?
- Where do you expect students to come from – direct from education or the workforce? Why?
- How many students do you expect to enrol each year? Why? Please provide projected figures for the first three years. For programmes to be delivered with a partner, it will be necessary to identify the minimum and maximum number of students to be enrolled each year.
- What is the anticipated volume of applicants? Have you consulted with the Admissions Office?
- What would you do if there was a particularly high or low ratio of applications to places?
- What fees will be charged for the programme? Why that level?
- Fees - will there be premium fees? Have you made a case for a fees reduction via the Sub-group on Fees, Bursaries and Scholarships, if appropriate?
- How are they likely to finance their studies (government/employer sponsored or self-financed)?

Student Experience
- What will it be like to be a student on the programme?
- What will be the modes of study (*e.g.* full-time, part-time) and delivery (*e.g.* campus based, distance learning)? How does this fit with your target market?
- Will the programme be delivered wholly, or in part, using an online mode of delivery (e.g. online distance learning or blended learning)? If so, you should consult the University's Technology Enhanced Learning Team (v.holmes@reading.ac.uk).
- Will the programme involve Study Abroad? Have you consulted the Erasmus and Study Abroad Manager (m.a.dowse@reading.ac.uk) in the development of the programme?
- Will different or extra student and academic support be offered? (*e.g.* an international tutor)
- How will you ensure that the programme delivers a high quality student experience? Please provide examples to support your answer.
- Will students on the programme require bespoke induction and transition events (particularly if the programme involves transfer from different modes of learning or between teaching locations)?
- Will there be a suitable range of teaching methods and student learning opportunities? Please provide examples.
- Will students be able to transfer onto any other programmes?
- How will you seek student evaluation and input in the programme? (particularly for collaborative provision or where students are not based on campus)

- For arrangements which involve the transfer of students from a partner institution to a later stage of a programme at Reading, what will there be a good quality student experience away from Reading? What will be the impact of a group of students arriving en masse into the student body – both for the arriving students and the current cohort?
- For all programmes – delivered at Reading or with a partner: Have you taken into account the entitlements of disabled students when designing the programme? Have you paid attention to the accessibility of the physical learning and teaching environment so that disabled students are not disadvantaged?
- How will you ensure the programme is inclusive, catering to a wider range of diversity within the student population?

Employability and Destinations
- What work-related and placement opportunities will be available on the programme?
- Have you consulted the *Staff guide to managing placements* http://www.reading.ac.uk/careers/staff/managing-placements.asp and the Senior Placement and Development Manager (e.l.sowden@reading.ac.uk) when developing your programme?
- How will you ensure that students are able to gain employment after graduation?
- Where will students work after they finish the programme *i.e.* what evidence exists for demand for this qualification?
- Are students likely to pursue further study? At Reading?

Quality Assurance
- How will the programme fit with the University's QME processes?
  - What will be the membership of the Board of Studies? How often will it meet?
  - What will be the membership of the Board of Examiners? How often will it meet?
  - Who will be the External Examiner?
- Have you discussed any variation to the University's QME processes with the Centre for Quality Support and Development?

External
- Is the programme supported by external funding or is its creation part of the process of applying for external funding?
- Will the programme be accredited? If so, have you consulted and received a response from the relevant Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB)? Please attach their report(s), if available
- Have you consulted and received reports from:
  - Employers
  - Other HEIs
  - Current and former External Examiners
- What involvement will employers have in the programme?

Consultation with current students
- How have current student views been collected and reflected in the development of this new programme?
- Please provide evidence of student comments and feedback obtained via any of the following mechanisms:
  - SSLCs or Boards of Studies
  - Module Evaluation Forms
  - Focus groups or other questionnaires
  - Periodic Review
  - Feedback from NSS or PTES
  - Online discussion forms (e.g. Blackboard, Facebook etc.)

Financial Summary

- This should be brief and reflect the issues raised in this section, *i.e.* anticipated expenditure, income. It could be included as an appendix to the proposal. For programmes delivered with a partner, projected expenditure should consider document translations costs e.g. translation of the contract and the cost of a site visit, if required.

Sections C, D and E apply to programmes involving a partner only. Support is available from the International Partnerships Team (for international arrangements) and the Centre for Quality Support and Development (for UK and international arrangements).

The TLD or their delegate will provide Schools with a partnership report, following the partnership visit. The partnership report should be appended to the final version of the *Business Proposal.*

C – Partner status and operating context

Partner Status

- Is there a Memorandum of Understanding with the partner? When does the MoU expire?[2]
- What existing relationship does the partner have with UoR? Does the Partner have any other partnership programmes with the University?
- What comments and recommendations have been provided by any *Partnership annual review (Form 1/Form 2/Partner sub-report)?* For both this programme and any other collaborations with the University.

Have you established, in addition to checks carried out at MoU stage:

- UoR's experience of operating the proposed model of the programme?
- UoR's ability to successfully resource investigation of the programme with specific consideration of resource implications for the ADTL and CQSD?
- UoR's ability to successfully resource delivery the programme with specific consideration of resource implications for the ADTL, CQSD, Blackboard, the Library?
- the School's ability to successfully resource investigation of the programme and delivery the programme including funding of a full site visit where applicable?
- Please refer to the Guidance on Complaints, Appeals and Misconduct informed by the OIA Guidance of Working with Others found here:
  http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/files/qualitysupport/OIA_guidance_for_partnerships_-_for_publishing.pdf

- the partner's status (an HEI with or without degree awarding powers, further education college, or other organisation)?
- the partner's previous experience of delivering higher education at the relevant level?
- the partner's knowledge, understanding and previous experience with UK higher education?
- the partner's experience of academic partnerships collaborative provision with other institutions with special note of current arrangements with UK HEIs?
- the partner shares the University's educational objectives and expectations for the assurance and maintenance of academic standards and qualities?
- the partners fit and overlap with UoR in terms of qualification levels and subject areas?

---

[2] Before an academic partnership can be pursued, a MoU must usually exist between UoR and the partner. The International Partnerships Team can advise if an MoU is already in place.

- the financial status and stability of the partner which indicates it is demonstrably financially capable of entering into and maintaining the arrangement *(only applicable where the partnership involves a significant financial risk to the University?*
- the partner has the ability to contract (if a binding agreement is to be put in place) and who the contracting party is?
- the partner has the ability to enter into a partnership for delivery of the type of programme and arrangement in question. Are there any restrictions on what they can and cannot do?
- for jointly awarded degrees: do institutional regulations permit the award of joint degrees *i.e.* does the partner have the requisite legal and regulatory capacity?
- does the partner have any business interests and/or links with private or overseas providers which could present potential risks to the proposed arrangement?
- has in place the suitable type and standard of facilities and resources need to meet their areas of responsibility for delivering the proposed programme? Including health and safety, equality of opportunity, student complaints procedure, disability provisions, staff development opportunities, etc.

What kind of profile does the partner have:
- with QAA?
- with their own quality assurance body?
- in the media?
- with their other partners?

Operating Context

Country context:
- What is the level of stability within the country and region in which the partner is based including profile with UK Border Agency?
- What legal and regulatory frameworks and Higher education structures does the partner operate within?
- Is UoR able to operate within the legislative framework and the political, ethical and cultural context requirements of the region?
- What is UoR's experience working in the partner's HE sector and area of the world?
- Are there any country specific regulations to operate the programme? E.g. Letter of Accreditations, application to the local Ministry of Education:
- Are there any monetary restrictions including any laws relating to tax, VAT, transfer of money, limit on levels of fees? Are there any laws relating to partners in receipt of public funds where relevant?
- Are there any issues with transferring monies out of the countries concerned?
- What is the official language of the country the partner is based in and to what extent is English is spoken as a second language?

Regulatory considerations:
- Are there any implications for professional accreditation of the programme if it is delivered in partnership?
- What are the implications of current UK legislation affecting the admission of international students (i.e. immigration and visa requirements) for the programme?
- How can UoR be compliant with copyright licenses, library licenses, software licenses and data transfer whilst pursuing academic activity in the region?

Contingency arrangements:

- What arrangements would be made for students were the ownership of a partner, or its status, to change in such a way that might lead to the termination of the arrangements. What would be the costs?

D - Operational structure and division of responsibilities

- Who is going to be the key individual responsible for this partnership at the Partner?
- What are the governance structures of the partner? Who are the key senior actors at the partner? Have they shown support for the partnership?
- What is the assessment of the partner institutions' staff academic and professional capacity? Have you reviewed CVs of staff teaching on the programme?[3]
- How are the responsibilities of the partner going to be carried out and by whom? *i.e.* teaching staff, admin staff
- What Committees and Management teams will be involved in the operation of the programme partnership?
- What measures are proposed to ensure the smooth transition between institutions (where relevant) and a good student experience?
- What considerations have been given to the different cultural assumptions about learning methods in the partner's country?
- Which partner will be responsible for and incur the costs associated with each element of the programme? Please <u>fully</u> complete the following table. Please note that responsibility may be for either one of the partners or shared.

Areas of Responsibility	Please state which partner will have responsibility for each of these areas and provide a detailed account of the arrangements which will be made in each case.
Curriculum design	
Advertising and marketing	
Recruitment activities	
Application advice	
Admissions	
Registration	
Accommodation	
Induction	
Teaching	
Teaching facilities	
IT facilities & resources	
VLE	
Learning resources	

---

[3] It is a requirement that the University should formally and in advance of their commencing teaching on University programmes, approve the curricula vitae of all relevant partner staff. The Memorandum of Agreement covering academic partnership will stipulate partners must keep UoR updated with the CVs of any new staff teaching on the programme.

Health and Safety	
Student evaluation	
Setting assessments	
Marking & feedback	
Moderation	
External examining	
Examination Board	
Board of Studies	
Annual Programme Report	
Arrangements for Periodic Review/revalidation	
Student representation	
Disciplinary matters	
Appeals	
Complaints	
Collecting tuition fees	
Student support (academic)	
Careers education, information, advice and guidance[4]	
Student support (pastoral)	
Student support (disabilities)	
Staff visits to other partner (informal/formal, for teaching, reviewing programme etc)	
Staff training and evaluation	
Certificates & transcripts	
Graduation	

E - Validation Fee (if applicable)

- Based on the findings on the information presented in this Business Proposal, what Validation Fee (if applicable) will be charged for the programme? A Validation Fee may be included to cover the costs of running the collaboration itself and may involve:

---

[4] The eventual Memorandum of Agreement with the partner should specify responsibilities for the provision of Careers Education, Information Advice and Guidance. While studying at a partner institution, it would normally be expected that students access the partner institution's careers service, where available, in the first instance. See *Policy for Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance*.

- o A "core fee" – a base fee set to cover all the unchanging costs of operating the collaboration; and
- o A "per head fee" – in addition to the base fee, a fee based on student enrolment.
- Validation fees will be renegotiated on a regular basis in line with inflation and to reflect any changes in the nature of the relationship.

Section 4: Operational Plan

- What action do you propose to take once the proposal is approved?
- When will the proposed programme begin?
- How will you monitor the success of the programme?

Section 5: Conclusion

References

Acknowledgements