



ARDEN UNIVERSITY QUALITY ASSURANCE DOCUMENT QA 45 – AGENT AND MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT APPROVAL PROCEDURE

Introduction and Definitions

The purpose of this document is to provide a set of procedures for the approval and management of Agents and Referral Agents who are to be contracted to recruit students on behalf of Arden University for their Distance Learning (DL) and campus-based provision. These procedures are designed to ensure that responsibilities are clearly documented and that standards are maintained and enhanced in accordance with Arden University's Regulatory Framework.

Agent

A partner company which acts in a marketing and advisory capacity only to support the admission or progression of students to/on Arden University programmes. An agent is a marketing partner and not an academic partner.

Referral Agreement

A referral agreement may be signed with a company or partner organisation which acts to refer applications or groups of applications to Arden for admission to a programme of study. Referral agents have no ongoing role in supporting progression and do not publish marketing materials relating to Arden's programmes, unless by prior agreement. The approval procedure and monitoring requirements for a referral agreement are the same as those for a new agent.

The Approval and Management Process

There are four key stages involved in the approval and management process for Agents and Referral Agents, namely:

1. Manager Appraisal and Due Diligence
2. Review/approval by the Partnership Approval Group (on behalf of the Senior Management Team)
3. Contract
4. Ongoing Monitoring and Review

These processes apply to all enquiries from prospective agents irrespective of whether those enquiries are unsolicited or have been elicited either directly or via promotional/ marketing activity.

Stage 1 – Manager Appraisal and Due Diligence

It is the responsibility of the Arden University proposing manager to undertake an initial appraisal of the partnership opportunity and to put forward a business case for the partnership for consideration.

Any organisation entering into contract with Arden University must be a legal entity operating in accordance with the legal obligations pertaining to the country in which they operate. In the case of an individual operating as a sole trader, that individual must satisfy the necessary laws for sole trader operation within the country in which their business operates. This means that the organisation or person should be registered with the appropriate authorities within their country, and operating in accordance with the laws relating to a company or a sole trader. The organisation must also have permission from the relevant authorities to deliver the services that it is contracted to undertake with Arden University. Appropriate documentation will be sought to evidence the legal standing and stability of the organisation as part of the due-diligence. The partner must also declare any conflicts of interest in relation to other partners or individuals working with their organisation.

The manager should present the business case for the partnership (using QA 45 – FORM 1) and compile and submit with it the due diligence documentation (using QA 45 – FORM 2) to the Quality Manager (Partnerships) in the Academic Affairs department.

In the case of an agent office or premises receiving potential students and other parties on Arden University's behalf (i.e. where there is Arden branding on site), then the following checklists should be completed. This can be done by an appropriate member of staff from Arden University, or third party agent acting on behalf of Arden University. In the case of a third party agent the Senior Management Team of Arden University must assure itself that the individual or individuals undertaking this due diligence is appropriately qualified and experienced to make a judgment against what could reasonably be expected to maintain Arden University's standards.

References may be sought as appropriate.

1. PREMISES

		Comment	Action
Does the partner have a lease for the building to cover the period of the agreement with Arden University?	YES/NO/NA		
Is the exterior of the building adequate to support Arden University's brand of high quality value for money education?	YES/NO/NA		
Does the organisation have adequate accommodation and facilities to support staff working on the premises?	YES/NO/NA		
Does the centre have appropriate public liability insurance?	YES/NO/NA		

2. HEALTH & SAFETY (WHERE MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WILL BE ENTERING BUILDINGS) All relevant certificates and policy documents should be appended to the completed form

		Comment	Action
Does the organisation have a health and safety policy and is there evidence that it meets its legal obligation in this respect?	YES/NO		
Has the organisation undergone a health and safety inspection and does it meet its legal obligation in respect of fire and evacuation procedures? Does it have appropriate certification to confirm the above as appropriate?	YES/NO		
Does the organisation have adequate first aid arrangements including appropriate notices and appropriately trained staff?	YES/NO		
Is there evidence that the organisation meets its legal obligations in respect of disabled access?	YES/NO		

3. SUPPORT STAFFING & ADMINISTRATION

		Comment	Action
Is there evidence of procedures for complying with statutory requirements in relation to employment?	YES/NO		
Is there a named person with overarching responsibility for quality	YES/NO		

4. SAFEGUARDING (UK LEGISLATION WITH REGARD TO MINORS AND VULNERABLE ADULTS)

		Comment	Action
Is there evidence of procedures for complying with statutory requirements in relation to safeguarding?	YES/NO		



Stage 2 – Review and Approval by the Partnership Approval Group

The Partnership Approval Group will make an appraisal of the documentation supplied at Stage 1 and decide whether the partnership proposal should proceed.

Where a potential agent is deficient in a certain area of provision and it can be rectified, then advice and guidance will be given to rectify problem areas within a specified timescale.

Articulation agreements, study centres and franchise/validation arrangements should be developed in accordance with the separate procedures specified in Arden University's Regulatory Framework and Validation Handbook.

Stage 3 – Contract

Roles and responsibilities must be clearly set out and agreed via a signed contract before any agent or referral agreement commences. The contract should include:

- Financial details
- Minimum student numbers
- Legal aspects.

Stage 4 – Ongoing Monitoring and Review

Agents and referral agreements will normally be subject to a six month progress review of initial performance and then monitored via the Agent Annual Review process.