

QUALITY ASSURANCE DOCUMENT QA 46 – STUDY CENTRE APPROVAL PROCEDURE

Introduction and Definitions

The purpose of this document is to provide a set of procedures for the approval and management of Study Centres where Arden University contracts premises and support facilities for their campus-based provision. These procedures are designed to ensure that responsibilities are clearly documented and that standards are maintained and enhanced in accordance with the Regulatory Framework.

Study Centre

A partner organisation which acts as a support provider in terms of learning resources or facilities for student learning opportunities, with full responsibility for delivery and assessment of the programme being retained by Arden University. Partnerships with support providers may include provision for Arden staff to teach students on the partner organisation's premises.

Arden may also operate Study Centres on premises which are owned or leased directly by the University or by its parent company. Such centres do not constitute a partnership and will be approved by the Senior Management Team and the Academic Board, following a site inspection by the Academic Director and Registrar or their nominees.

The Approval Process for Partner Study Centres

There are six key stages involved in the approval and management process for Study Centres, namely:

1. Academic Director Appraisal and Due Diligence
2. Partnership Approval Group
3. Site Approval Panel
4. Quality and Standards Committee
5. Contract
6. Ongoing Monitoring and Review

Stage 1 – Academic Director Appraisal and Due Diligence

It is the responsibility of the Academic Director to undertake an initial appraisal of the partnership opportunity, including due diligence checks.

Any organisation entering into a contract with Arden University must be a legal entity operating in accordance with the legal obligations pertaining to the country in which it operates. The organisation must also have permission from the relevant authorities to deliver the services that it is contracted to undertake with Arden. Appropriate documentation will be sought to evidence the legal standing and sustainable financial 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 main purpose of the due diligence is to assess the potential of the Study Centre to provide the services for which they will be contracted. Where appropriate, the following checklists may be completed. This can be done by an appropriate member of staff from Arden, or third party agent acting on its behalf. In the case of a third party agent the Senior Management Team 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 the University's standards.

1. PREMISES

		Comment	Action
Does the partner have a lease for the building to cover the period of the agreement?	YES/NO/NA		
Is the exterior of the building adequate to support Arden'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. PREMISES

		Comment	Action
Do students have access to a quiet area for study? Ideally there should also be an area for recreation and at least there should be plans for the centre to develop this in some way.	YES/NO		
Is there a reception area where students can enter the centre, sign registers, and make enquiries etc.	YES/NO		
What is the student number capacity of the centre and is this in line with the Business Plan expectations?	YES/NO		
Do students have access to dining facilities either on the premises or	YES/NO		

nearby in a local restaurant or cafeteria?			
Are there adequate physical resources available to meet the programme requirements	YES/NO		
Have all sites been visited and checked?	YES/NO		

3. HEALTH & SAFETY (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		

4. 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		
Are arrangements in place for attendance monitoring and other record keeping?	YES/NO		
Is the accommodation satisfactory for conducting examinations?	YES/NO		

5. STUDENT WELFARE

		Comment	Action
Does the Study Centre have adequate arrangements for pastoral support of students?	YES/NO		
Does the Study Centre have a Disability policy and is it adequate?	YES/NO		
Will students have access to financial, legal and other advice?	YES/NO		
What are the arrangements for access to medical facilities?	YES/NO		

6. LEARNING RESOURCES

		Comment	Action
Does the organisation have a library and is it adequate to support students on the proposed programmes?	YES/NO/NA		
What IT resources does the centre have and how many students can it accommodate?	YES/NO/NA		
Is there Internet access?	YES/NO/NA		

Stage 2 – Review by the Partnership Approval Group

The rationale for the partnership, the specific nature of the support to be provided and an analysis of the local market demand will be submitted by the Academic Director to the Partnership Approval Group for consideration.

The Partnership Approval Group should make an appraisal of all documentation supplied at Stage 1 and decide whether or not to convene a Site Approval Panel to conduct a site visit. If a site visit is to be undertaken, the Partnership Approval Group will determine whether an external subject specialist should be appointed to the Site Approval Panel. External subject specialist expertise will normally only be required if there are any subject specialist resources or facilities to be considered.

Stage 3 – Site Approval Panel

The Site Approval Panel will comprise the Head of Academic Affairs, the Head of Student Support and a Programme Director. In addition, an external subject specialist will be added to the panel if there are any subject specialist resources or facilities to be considered.

The Site Approval Panel will consider:

- The suitability of the learning resources and premises to be used by Arden's students, including the provision of an appropriate and safe working environment for students;
- The suitability of any student support services which will be utilised by students;
- The partner's arrangements for managing and developing its learning resources and relevant support services;
- The adequacy of any subject specialist learning resources, such as laboratories or specialist library provision, where appropriate.

The Site Approval Panel will submit a written report to the Quality and Standards Committee.

Stage 4 – Quality and Standards Committee

The Quality and Standards Committee will consider the rationale and nature of the proposed partnership and the written report of the Site Approval Panel (against the criteria outlined in Stage 3 above) and may approve new partnerships with UK Study Centres on behalf of the Academic Board if they feel that the facilities and/or services to be provided by the partner are suitable.

For international study centres, the Quality and Standards Committee will make a recommendation to the Academic Board, having due regard to any local regulations or restrictions in the relevant country. Academic Board must consider and approve all new study centres outside the UK prior to launch.

Decisions made by the Quality and Standards Committee will be reported to the Academic Board and to the Senior Management Team. Decisions made by the Academic Board will be reported to the Senior Management Team.

Stage 5 – Contract

Roles and responsibilities must be clearly set out and agreed via a signed contract before any Study Centre partnership commences. The contract should include:

- Financial details
- Minimum student numbers
- A schedule of roles and responsibilities of both parties
- Quality assurance requirements
- Legal aspects.

Stage 4 – Ongoing Monitoring and Review

The operation of programmes at Study Centres will be subject to programme annual monitoring and periodic review which will include explicit, detailed evaluation of the facilities and resources available to students on campus and detail any required actions or desired enhancements.