



# Edinburgh Napier University

## Operational Guide To Franchising

Version Date: September 2023

### Contents

1. Introduction .....	2
2. Definition .....	3
3. Key Features Of The Edinburgh Napier Franchise .....	3
4. Resources .....	6
5. Responsibilities .....	7
Programme Leaders.....	7
Programme Administrators .....	9
Academic Staff .....	10
6. Setting & Moderation Of Assessments.....	12
7. Programme Assessment Boards .....	13
8. Board Of Studies .....	13
9. Joint University Partnership Board .....	14
10. Reporting.....	15
11. External Examiners.....	16
12. Staff Support .....	16
13. Student Status and Support .....	17
14. Collaborative Agreement.....	17
15. Monitoring and Review.....	17

# 1. Introduction

This operational guidance document details Edinburgh Napier University's approach to establishing and maintaining delivery of programmes through a franchise arrangement. It must be read alongside the University's Quality Framework (specifically section 4) which outlines the processes for the development, approval, and associated activities including due diligence and monitoring and review of provision delivered in partnership.

This document and the Quality Framework will assist colleagues within schools who are considering pursuing this type of collaborative provision. Moreover, it provides potential Partner institutions with information on the University's expectations relating to franchising, including the underpinning principles of this type of collaborative model.

It is important to note that the Franchise TNE model is designed to be an alternative to flying faculty, and other models of collaboration. It is not intended to replace other models, and Franchise TNE provision may not be a suitable model for all partners and markets.

The key parameters, within which this guidance and the Quality Framework operate, are as follows:

The documents have been developed in the context of the UK's national quality assurance framework and with specific reference to the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education Quality Code

(<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>) which provides guidance on maintaining academic quality and standards for universities and colleges.

Particular cognisance has been taken of QAA

Partnerships: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/partnerships>

## 2. Definition

The QAA defines franchising as:

*‘A process by which a degree-awarding body agrees to authorise another organisation to deliver (and sometimes assess) part or all of one (or more) of its own approved programmes. Often, the degree-awarding body retains direct responsibility for the programme content, the teaching and assessment strategy, the assessment regime and the quality assurance. Students normally have a direct contractual relationship with the degree-awarding body’.*

## 3. Key Features Of The Edinburgh Napier Franchise

- a. The University remains ultimately responsible for the quality of student learning opportunities and the academic standards of the award(s).
- b. The University will set up franchised programmes based on the expectation that partners are able (and committed to) to provide the infrastructure, learning resources and student support of sufficient quality and quantity to support the intended delivery in a way that is equivalent to provision at Edinburgh Napier.
- c. Due Diligence will be performed for Franchise partnerships in line with the guidance in Section 4 of the Quality Framework.
- d. Partner Institutions will be required to adopt all aspects of the University’s quality management systems and regulations.
- e. The curriculum content of a franchised programme is developed and owned by the University; it will normally be operational in Edinburgh.
- f. Any approved changes to on-campus provision must be adopted by the Partner
- g. Assessments will be set by University staff in consultation with Partner Institution staff; franchise students will be monitored, progressed and awarded **through a University Programme Assessment Board**.
- h. Delivery of the course on the basis of multiple intakes of students (ie more

than one intake in any academic year) may be permitted and will be discussed at the time of approval.

- i. Third party or serial franchising is NOT permitted.
- j. Teaching of a franchised programme on another of the Partner's campuses may be permitted but will be subject to a separate approval event.
- k. No franchise provision will be considered for which the language of teaching and assessment is not English.
- l. The University delegates responsibility for the recruitment of students to the Partner Institution. Academic entry requirements and English Language requirements will be set by the University and agreed with the partner who will take responsibility for admitting students to these agreed standards. These requirements will be reviewed on an annual basis by the University. The University may have involvement in complex or borderline decisions as and when they arise as detailed in the agreement.
- m. Franchise students are registered with / matriculated by the **University and are subject to its Academic Regulations, including those relating to academic appeals.**
- n. The Partner Institution is responsible for the delivery of the programme, the provision of learning resources and student support. The University will provide the Virtual Learning Environment, and, where appropriate access to online library resources.
- o. The TNE and Global Online Team will provide administrative support and management of the student record, working in liaison with Partner administration staff.
- p. English language support will be provided by the Partner. Students will be expected to meet Edinburgh Napier's English language requirements upon entry to the programme.
- q. The University will provide the Partner Institution with the relevant teaching materials to deliver the programme. The University is willing to

agree appropriate contextualisation of the curriculum and /or assessments associated with the franchise delivery, provided that the overall aims and learning outcomes of programmes are unchanged from what is delivered on-campus and that any changes to assessment tasks are made in accordance with University processes and regulations including formal approval by the School.

- r. The materials provided to the partner will be of a consistent standard and format, with the TNE and Global Online Service supporting the relevant academic colleagues to produce these. A brief document will also be prepared by University Module Leaders to provide guidance for Partner teaching staff on the teaching and assessment of the module.
- s. All Partner academic staff will be expected to complete a training and development programme, including: an initial induction prior to the start of the programme, covering technical and operational aspects; training from University Module Leaders on the academic content of the modules; the DLTE TNE Module, prior to or over the course of the first 2 trimesters of the programme, covering the ENU approach to LTA; and the ENhance pathway to HEA fellowship. Training will take into account the expectation of staff turnover.
- t. All Partner support staff involved in the implementation of the programmes will be expected to complete a training and development programme covering the relevant ENU regulations and procedures for the tasks they oversee.
- u. Academic Skills Support needs will be assessed during the set up stages of a partnership. If the partner is not able to provide such support, then it could be provided by the University with a charge to the partner but must be discussed with the Academic Skills team at an early stage of the development of the franchise.
- v. An External Examiner(s) will be required for the franchised programme and should normally be the External Examiner(s) appointed for the programme delivered at the University.

- w. The University / Schools and the Partner will identify staff, who will be responsible for the franchise arrangement. The University will assign a member of academic staff for the role of Programme Leader and a member of operational staff to complete the tasks of Programme Administrator for the franchise programme, to coordinate with the Partner around the elements of programme implementation (see responsibilities below).
- x. The partner will be responsible for the recruitment and selection of appropriately qualified teaching staff in accordance with University guidelines.
- y. The partner will be responsible for the marketing of the franchised programme(s) in accordance with guidelines set by the University.
- z. The University will require to undertake a review in the first year of operation of the partnership (ref section 4g of the Quality Framework). The University may invoke review in subsequent years.
- aa. The University reserves the right to carry out audits of the partnership and programme(s) above and beyond the initial reviews of the operation of the franchised programmes.

## **4. Resources**

The Partner Institution is responsible for the delivery of the franchised programme. It must therefore, have the resources required (physical and human) and must be able to satisfy the University as to the adequacy of these at all sites at which the course is delivered. Overall responsibility for providing learning resources including teaching space, specialist facilities and equipment, library and IT resources and student services to support the intended delivery lies with the Partner Institution. The verification of the partner's ability to provide these will be undertaken as part of the due diligence exercises as outlined in section 4c of the Quality Framework.

## 5. Responsibilities

The responsibilities listed in this section is not intended as an exhaustive list of all operational and academic tasks involved in the implementation of a franchise programme. Prior to the implementation of a programme, all necessary tasks will be mapped with the specific partner.

### Programme Leaders

Each Party will appoint a Programme Leader who will oversee the smooth running of the programme and coordinate all activities throughout.

All student communication in the first instance is with the Partner Programme Leader. Guidance is sought (by the Partner Programme Leader) from the Edinburgh Napier Programme Leader or the relevant module leader when required. The successful operation of the programme depends upon sharing information, trust and regular appraisal of developments.

Their duties are as below:

#### **PROGRAMME LEADER, EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY**

- Co-produce Programme Handbook (or equivalent documentation) and provide content updates on an annual basis.
- Liaise with the Partner Programme Leader.
- Participate in the design and implementation of a training programme for staff at the Partner.
- To hold a minimum of one meeting per academic year with Partner Academic Staff.
- Liaise with ENU module leaders.
- Coordinate with the Edinburgh Napier programme administration team.
- Approve admissions to the programme where applicants do not meet the standard entry requirements.
- Approve the appointment of Partner Academic Staff, prior to commencing involvement in the programme.
- Monitor student progress and awards through the Programme Assessment Board.

- Advise and monitor the Partner on suspected academic integrity cases.
- Assist the Partner Programme Leader in producing and submitting an Annual Programme Report for the Board of Studies.
- Assist the Partner Programme Leader where necessary with advice on student academic progress.
- Convene the Board of Studies.
- Participate in the Joint University Partnership Board.

### **PROGRAMME LEADER, THE PARTNER**

- Liaise with the Edinburgh Napier Programme Leader.
- Co-produce the Programme Handbook and update on an annual basis.
- Co-ordinate local programme administration.
- Seek approval for appointments of Partner Academic Staff from the Edinburgh Napier Programme Leader, prior to commencing teaching on the programme.
- Brief Partner Academic Staff on their duties and responsibilities.
- Review and issue offers of admission to the applicants and consult with Edinburgh Napier University where applicants do not meet the standard entry requirements.
- Monitor student progress and liaise with Partner Academic Staff.
- Convene and attend Student Staff Liaison Committee meetings.
- Obtain feedback from students by arranging for the completion of appropriate questionnaires, and share with partner academic colleagues and ENU PLs/MLs.
- Counsel students in relation to academic and pastoral care.
- Plan advertising and promotional activities for the Programme as part of an Annual Marketing Plan for the programme.
- Facilitate the production of Partner Module Leader's Evaluation Reports and produce an Annual Programme Report for submission to Edinburgh Napier and the Board of Studies.
- Produce a programme delivery schedule.
- Oversee the contextualisation of programme materials and assessments on modules.
- Participate in and coordinate with Edinburgh Napier on the production and implementation of a training programme for academic staff.
- Oversee the internal moderation of all assessments, in line with the Collaborative



Agreement.

- Participate in the Programme Assessment Board.
- Participate in the Board of Studies.
- Participate in the Joint University Partnership Board.

## **Programme Administrators**

Each Party will appoint a Programme Administrator who will oversee the administrative activities associated with the programme. All operational communication will be through these administrators.

Their duties are as below:

### **EDINBURGH NAPIER, PROGRAMME ADMINISTRATOR**

- Act as the operational point of liaison for Edinburgh Napier.
- Maintain programme and student information on the Edinburgh Napier SharePoint programme site, so that information is shared with the Partner in a secure manner to meet data protection legislation.
- Arrange provision of Edinburgh Napier examination papers to the Partner, as required.
- Maintain records of student performance.
- Pass information on student results to the Partner for dissemination to students.
- Liaise with module and programme leader(s).
- Provide information or statistics on programme operation or student performance where required.
- Arrange Programme Assessment Boards.
- In consultation with the Partner counterpart, agree information to enable fee invoicing in accordance with the Collaborative Agreement.
- Perform other tasks as necessary for the implementation of the programme, including: processing module enrolments, supporting transcript requests, supporting graduation processes, etc.

## THE PARTNER, PROGRAMME ADMINISTRATOR

- Act as the operational point of liaison for Edinburgh Napier.
- Develop timetable for delivery, in consultation with the Partner Programme Leader and Edinburgh Napier Programme Leader.
- Notify timetable details to students and the Partner Programme Team.
- Arrange teaching and examination accommodation.
- Keep examination papers under secure conditions prior to examination.
- Arrange accommodation and invigilators for examinations, in accordance with Edinburgh Napier Guidance for Invigilation.
- Receipt and forward examination scripts to the Edinburgh Napier Programme Administrator in a secure manner, where required for moderation.
- Contacting students with overdue assessments.
- Maintain student records.
- Disseminate module results and Programme Assessment Board decisions to students.
- To maintain Programme and student information on SharePoint, so that information is shared with Edinburgh Napier in a secure manner to meet data protection legislation.
- Inform Edinburgh Napier timeously of any requests to suspend studies, defer modules or withdraw.
- In consultation with Edinburgh Napier counterpart, agree information to enable fee invoicing in accordance with the Collaborative Agreement.

## Academic Staff

Each Party will appoint suitably qualified staff to develop and deliver the programme.

Their duties are as below:

## EDINBURGH NAPIER MODULE LEADERS

**The duties of the Edinburgh Napier Module Leaders are to:**

- Maintain scholarly activity in relation to the module.
- Produce and maintain the teaching material and make available on Moodle for students to access.
- Prepare detailed guidelines for the Partner Academic Staff to ensure the

successful delivery of the module.

- Participate in the design and implementation of a module training programme for Partner Academic Staff.
- Liaise with Partner Academic Staff to ensure that the module reflects the needs of the local environment and ensure that local context is included at appropriate points.
- Participate in the marking/moderation of assessments, as required and as specified in the Collaborative Agreement that will be developed.
- Liaise with External Examiners as appropriate.
- Produce a summary report of module performance. This should include key statistics such as overall pass rate, mean and standard deviation. This report will be submitted to the Board of Studies.

## THE PARTNER ACADEMIC STAFF

**The duties of the Partner Academic Staff are to:**

- Participate in an induction and training programme prior to participation in programme delivery.
- Contextualise teaching materials and assessments, in liaison with University Module Leaders.
- Deliver lectures and tutorials as timetabled.
- Monitor student progress and report to the Partner Programme Leader students who are encountering difficulties and appear to be at risk of failing/withdrawing.
- Report to the Partner Programme Leader on the basis of records held and to highlight important issues.
- Participate where required in Student Staff Liaison Committee meetings.
- Liaise with the Edinburgh Napier Module Leader with regard to module content.
- Maintain scholarly activity in relation to their module.
- Provide module reports, participate in and provide information for Programme Assessment Boards as required.
- Analyse completed module feedback questionnaires and forward the result of this analysis to the Partner Programme Leader and Board of Studies for discussion.
- Produce and submit a Module Leader's Evaluative Report at the end of each

module to the Partner Programme Leader.

- Confirm module marks.

## 6. Setting & Moderation Of Assessments

For the setting of assessments, the responsibilities will be as follows:

- a. The University Module Leader sets a draft assessment
- b. The partner may contextualise the assessment
- c. Any contextualised assessment will be referred to the University Module Leader for review and approval
- d. If approved, the contextualised assessment will be set for students
- e. The partner will meet the University's expectations with respect to processes in assessment submission and marking
- f. For the moderation of assessments, the responsibilities will be as follows:
- g. The Partner will perform first marking on all assessments
- h. The Partner will perform internal moderation for all assessments for the duration of the partnership, which will be defined as equivalent to the University moderation arrangements for that programme
- i. The University will have oversight of the reliability of marking for all assessments. This will involve square root sampling moderation as standard. Depending on the successful implementation of a programme and training and guidance of partner academic staff, the Edinburgh Napier programme team may submit a proposal to CPC for an adjustment to the level of moderation performed. The University will confirm the marks.
- j. The partner will provide feedback to the students on their assessments in line with the student charter

- k. The partner's academic staff will be trained on the University marking processes and standards, through the DLTE TNE Module, ready for handover

## **7. Programme Assessment Boards**

Student results will be considered at Programme Assessment Boards – the remit and timing of the Boards will adhere to section A of the University regulations. Boards will be convened and clerked by University staff with participation by staff from the partner.

The Partner and University Programme Leaders and Partner Module Leaders will attend the Programme Assessment Boards.

## **8. Board Of Studies**

The Board of Studies will meet once per trimester, and will be made up of (for ENU): Programme Leader, School Head of International, , Module Leaders (for modules running that trimester); and (for partner) equivalents.

The JPRP will be responsible for:

- bb. Consider issues similar to an on campus ENU Board of Studies
- cc. Discussing the contextualisation of teaching materials and assessments.
- dd. Considering and approving any change to level of oversight, including use of moderation (in line with Franchise model). Only ENU representatives will be involved in the approval
- ee. Discussing any changes to the programme
- ff. Raising any concerns from students or lecturers regarding the standards or quality of the programme

- gg. Considering and approving the annual review document (and appendices), and submitting a summary to the Joint University Partnership Board
- hh. Consideration of SSLC (or equivalent forum) minutes and action taken in response to points raised
- ii. Progress on Recruitment
- jj. Progress on Retention
- kk. Key Performance Indicators
- ll. Report from External Examiner and Responses to Recommendations
- mm. Proposed Module changes
- nn. Identification of good practice
- oo. Flagging up of any issues that are considered to require further formal investigation (e.g. adverse External Examiner reports, student performance)

## **9. Joint University Partnership Board**

The Joint University Partnership Board will meet once per year, and will be made up of (for ENU): VP International, Head(s) of International of Schools involved, Heads of Learning and Teaching of Schools involved, Programme Leaders for relevant programmes, representative of TNE & GO team, International Projects Manager; and (for partner) equivalents and Programme Leaders.

The JUPB will be responsible for:

- pp. Considering and approving the summary annual review documents of each programme and minutes of relevant Board(s) of Studies
- qq. Making strategic decisions about the direction of the partnership (e.g. the setting of fees)
- rr. To monitor the progress and achievements of the franchise at a senior management level, through the receipt of management information related to student achievement and other performance indicators.

ss. To consider the provision operating in the collaborative partnership, in the context of local sector and industry developments, and to make recommendations to the University as to portfolio development, alternative delivery models and future opportunities for growth.

tt. To be a point of liaison between the University and the Partner Institution regarding institutional developments such as changes to management structures and strategic priorities.

uu. To be a point of liaison between the parties regarding the regulatory and quality assurance processes that apply in their respective countries.

vv. To discuss the annual Partner Institution quality report produced by the University for approval by the University's Collaborative Provision Committee.

## **10. Reporting**

The reporting system for these boards will be as follows:

- a. The partner will be responsible for the Staff-Student Liaison Committee (SSLC), and will submit the minutes and resulting action plans to the Board of Studies
- b. Partner Module Leaders will submit all relevant documentation resulting from module delivery to the Partner PL, for development of the Annual Review, and all such documentation will also be provided to the Board of Studies for review if necessary. This documentation will be identical to that produced by an ENU module leader for an on campus programme
- c. The Partner PL, in liaison with the ENU Programme Leader and Programme Administrator, will produce an Annual Review reflective report / analysis, which will be submitted to the Board of Studies
  - i. The Annual Review will include information on any complaints and appeals relevant to the programme
  - ii. A summary of the review will also be submitted to the Joint University Partnership Board
- d. The Joint University Partnership Board will submit a written update on all franchise activity to CPC each year

## **11. External Examiners**

The same External Examiner should be used for on campus and franchise programmes. If it is not feasible or possible to appoint the programme External Examiner to the franchised delivery then an additional External Examiner will be appointed, and the workload shared between the two. Appointment(s) should be made at the earliest opportunity to ensure the External Examiner is in place before the franchised programme delivery begins. The External Examiner's role and responsibilities are the same as for an on-campus programme. If currently appointed to a University programme they will not report separately on the franchised programme but will be asked to directly compare the standards and quality of the University and Partner Institution programme.

The External Examiner should be offered the opportunity to communicate with staff and students at the Partner Institution as part of their role.

## **12. Staff Support**

DLTE will provide support for partnerships through the TNE Module, which includes both an on-site component and 2 trimesters of virtual sessions.

DLTE will also support partner staff through the process of HEA Fellowship via ENroute. Once an initial group of staff (selected by the partner) has gone through this process, they will then support other staff through the process of achieving HEA Fellowship (acting as mentors). The input of DLTE must be discussed with the Head of DLTE as soon as possible in the early stages of the development of the franchise.

The Edinburgh Napier Programme Team will be involved in providing initial and ongoing training and advice to the partner programme team, around the content and delivery of the modules.

The TNE and Global Online Team will provide operational training on the University's policies and procedures to support Partner administration and academic staff.



### **13. Student Status and Support**

The expectation of a franchise programme is that student support is primarily provided by the Partner.

Students on franchise programmes will require a record within the Student Records system upon which to record marks and retain a record of the student's exit award. It is common for students on franchise programmes to have access to some electronic resources offered by the University eg Library services, and as such, these students would need to matriculate via a version of the online matriculation task to provide access to the resources agreed as part of the franchise agreement. This would also be the case where the franchise agreement included use of Moodle as the online learning platform.

An agreed approach to the handling of complaints will be decided between the University and the Partner.

The obligations of the University to the Partner Institution and the students must be made clear especially in case of termination of the partnership. It will be the normal expectation that arrangements will be made locally for students to complete their studies. Failing that, students may transfer to the University to complete their studies on payment of the relevant student tuition fee.

### **14. Collaborative Agreement**

All franchise partnerships must have a formal agreement in place, signed by both parties before delivery of the franchised programmes. Section 4f of the Quality Framework gives more details on the development and signing off of an agreement.

### **15. Monitoring and Review**

Monitoring the effectiveness of provision delivered in partnership with another organisation must take full account of the principles and process set out in Section 2 of the Quality Framework. Given the potential high risk element of franchising there will be additional monitoring activity at programme/ school and University level

including a first year review event as outlined in section 4g of the Quality Framework.

The Partner is responsible for ensuring students have the opportunity to give feedback to staff on their learning experience and are aware of how student views are considered and where necessary acted upon.

The Partner is responsible for ensuring each franchised course has an appropriate number of nominated programme student representatives, in line with University guidance, whose role is supported by appropriate training and development, delivered by Partner staff.

The Partner is responsible for ensuring course representatives participate in a staff student liaison committee or equivalent forum and to fully engage with quality assurance processes including monitoring annual review and enhancement, and the Partner Institution's governance structure.

There will be a Board of Studies based at School level and meeting once per trimester to consider operational matters/activities (see Section 7).

The Joint) University Partnership Board will meet annually and will take a strategic view of franchise collaborations. The Board will submit a report of activities to CPC (see Section 8).

Consideration will be given to the requirements for site visits from the University to the Partner in order to build the relationship for implementation.

The University reserves the right to carry out audits of the franchise partner's Institution and programmes(s) above and beyond the mutual review of the operation of the course; this could include reviewing students' assessed work and teaching observations. There are two main purposes for this: to provide Collaborative Provision Committee and ultimately Academic Board with the assurance that the delegated responsibilities for quality and standards of academic provision are being properly discharged and to promote quality enhancement by the identification and dissemination of good practice. Such audits could be prompted by indicators including adverse External Examiner reports.