CITY OF LONDON COLLEGE

A UNIVERSITY SECTOR PREMIER COLLEGE

Collaborative Partnership Policy

2025/26

Document Custodian: Senior Management Team
Review Cycle: Annually, or as required in response to regulatory or strategic changes
Last Reviewed: October 2025
Effective Date: October 2025
Review Date: July 2026
Version: 1.10.25
Circulation: Public: (Web Publication)
Sensitivity: Unclassified

1. Introduction

City of London College (CLC), established in 1979, enjoys a long tradition of providing high quality, relevant higher education provision, promoting its expectation to be a leading provider of national and international academic, vocational and professional education opportunities.

In recognition of its efforts, the College was awarded the 'Queen's Award for Enterprise 2011 '(International Trade).

Over its forty-four years history, CLC has offered diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate courses in collaboration with a range of UK universities including the London School of Economics & Political Science (University of London), Birmingham City University, University of Greenwich and Pearson.

The College has experience of delivering higher education provision from UK and international universities under validation and partnership arrangements and continually seeks to develop new collaborative ventures. Access to HE programmes in Business Management, and Engineering, delivered in 2015/16; 2016/17, confirm a 100% success rate, with many students progressing onto undergraduate programmes in UK universities, including the following Russell Group Universities - University of Sheffield, University of Bristol &; Queen Mary University. Other institutions include Kingston University, University of Salford, University of Kent, Edinburgh Napier University, Middlesex University, University of East London, and the University of West London. More recently, Pearson and City and Guilds provision in 2021/22, 2022/23 achieved 98% completion rate.

Current student performance outcomes, in collaboration with Plymouth Marjon University, Tyne Coast College and Gloucestershire College (Pearson), meet the requirements of the Office for Students (OfS) metrics B3: Continuation, Completion and Progression to Graduate Employment.

Continually emphasising enhancement of its overall academic and management operations, streamlining existing policies and procedures, the College has adopted a robust strategic approach in managing its higher education provision. In determining the educational character of its higher education provision, the College will provide wide ranging and flexible opportunities in support of developing a global student community, fostering and encouraging an environment where academic and professional leadership and management capabilities are recognised and developed across the College, enhancing staff and student performance, career potential, and quality of work experience.

The College has recently designed and implemented a new five-year Strategic Plan 2025-2028, positioning itself to respond positively and effectively to the challenges and growing demands of delivering alternative higher education provision within the UK and overseas.

The principle aim of the Strategic Plan and this Collaborative Partnership Policy is to define and orchestrate a long-term vision of the College's higher education provision as it positions itself within the public/private education environment and its relationships with its current & future partners.

Prior to the recent changes to the OfS Registration Application process, the College has completed a Self-Evaluation Document and Quality Plan, incorporating aspects of Consumer & Student Protection legislation aligned to the Competitions & Markets Authority (CMA)

guidance, along with information on Fair Access procedures. In line with the recent OfS announcements, however, the College understands it needs to prepare responses to the OfS new proposals to replace four of their initial conditions of registration with two new initial conditions, setting out requirements for a provider to treat students fairly and have effective governance arrangements in place.

Condition C5: Treating Students Fairly

The College acknowledges that Condition C5 will strengthen the OfS's ability to protect the consumer rights of students and ensure they are treated fairly resulting in the provision of information to students which is clear and easy to access confirming what will happen if changes are made to their course, as well as outlining fair processes for refunds, compensation and complaints. This new initial condition will also replace initial condition C1 (guidance on consumer protection law) and initial and ongoing condition C3 (student protection plan).

This means that institutions, including the College, will no longer need to demonstrate at registration how it has considered consumer law in developing its policies. Instead, it would submit the policies and processes which it would use to manage its relationships with students for assessment by the OfS. Taken together, this suite of student-facing documents will constitute institutional 'student protection plans 'which it will publish on its website after it is registered.

To align with the OfS's new consumer protection guidelines for 2025, the College has ensured compliance with consumer protection laws through updating current information relating to pre-course & offer-stage, marketing & recruitment, admissions, including enrolment stage, student withdrawals, and the voluntary withdrawal of students. In addition, the College will review wider documentation to ensure all contractual terms and conditions are fair and balanced, avoiding any terms that could be deemed unfair or detrimental to students.

Additional updates to complaints and appeals procedure documentation will ensure this information is accessible, clear, and fair, facilitating students understanding of how to raise concerns and how these will be addressed. A focus on documentation including a Complaints Policy, Whistleblower's Policy, Appeals Policy & Procedures and a Student Conduct, Dignity & Mutual Respect Policy will strengthen institutional approaches to supporting & enhancing the student experience.

Condition E7: Effective Governance (E7, E8, E9)

This condition requires the College to have effective governance arrangements in place for the purposes of being a higher education provider, including specific arrangements to prevent fraud and the inappropriate use of public funds, and a business plan that covers key parts of its operation. This condition also sets out requirements to ensure that institutional Governing bodies have members with appropriate knowledge and expertise and are fit to carry out their role. This condition would replace the existing initial conditions E1 (public interest governance) and E2 (management and governance).

The principle aim of a governance framework is to define internal processes as it positions itself within the current higher education landscape and regulatory oversight of the Office for Students (OfS) and the new Designated Quality Body (DQB). The College will need to

confirm that the structures in place, comply with the core values and the primary elements of governance and assurance of the following:

- Committee of University Chair's (CUC) Higher Education Code of Governance-December 2014, (Revised June 2018), [https://www.universitychairs.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CUC-HE-Code-of-Governance-publication-final.pdf]
- Association of Employment & Learning Provider's Code of Good Governance for Independent Training Providers in (September 2018), [https://www.aelp.org.uk/governance/]
- Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life. [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life]

The College will need to commit to monitoring and adapting to regulatory changes, ensuring they stay informed about ongoing consultations and updates to regulatory requirements, such as the proposed new initial conditions of registration, and will adapt policies and procedure documentation accordingly.

By proactively implementing these measures, the College will ensure alignment with the OfS's 2025 guidelines, ensuring the protection of students' rights and maintaining compliance with consumer protection standards.

- Office for Students - Consumer Protection
- Office for Students - OfS Strategy 2025 to 2030
- Office for Students - Students as Consumers
- Office for Students - New Initial Conditions of Registration
- Office for Students - Compliance with Consumer Protection Law
- Office for Students - Consultation on Regulatory Updates

Policy Objectives

- Enhance Educational Offerings: Through collaboration, to offer students a broader range of educational opportunities that leverage the strengths of both institutions.
- Maintain Academic Standards: Ensure that all collaborative programs meet or exceed the academic standards of both institutions and are compliant with OfS regulations.
- Promote Student Success: Focus on student experience, progression, and employability through shared resources and expertise.
- Compliance with Regulatory Framework: Adhere to the OfS conditions of registration, particularly concerning academic standards, student protection, and transparency.

Scope of Collaboration

- Joint and Dual Awards: Programmes where both institutions confer degrees or qualifications.

- Articulation Agreements: Agreements allowing students from the college to transfer credits to the university for further study.
- Research Partnerships: Joint research initiatives or projects that benefit both academic staff and students.
- Exchange Programs: Facilitating student and staff exchanges to enhance learning and teaching methods.

Policy Details

- Approval and Monitoring - Approval Process: All partnerships must undergo a rigorous approval process involving:
- A formal proposal detailing the nature of the collaboration, expected outcomes, and resource implications.
- Review by joint academic committees from both institutions to ensure alignment with strategic goals and regulatory compliance.
- Approval by the relevant governing bodies or committees at both institutions.

Monitoring:

- Regular reviews (at least annually) to assess the partnership's performance against agreed objectives, student feedback, and accreditation standards.
- Use of the OfS's quality and standards conditions to guide assessments, ensuring that the partnership continues to meet regulatory expectations.

Quality Assurance

- Quality of Education: Both institutions commit to ensuring that the quality of education provided through collaborative programs is equivalent to those offered independently by each institution. This includes:
- Alignment with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education & ensuring that students achieve the relevant learning outcomes as per the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ).

Student Experience: Collaborative programs must offer students:

- Clear information about the nature of the partnership and its implications on their studies.
- Access to support services from both institutions.
- A cohesive student experience despite the involvement of two distinct educational bodies.

Student Protection

- Transparency: All students must be informed about the partnership arrangements, including how it affects their educational journey and qualifications.
- Contingency Plans: In line with OfS Condition C4, both institutions will prepare and communicate clear student protection plans detailing actions in scenarios like partner withdrawal or course discontinuation.

Governance and Management

- Joint Oversight: A steering committee or equivalent with representatives from both institutions should oversee the partnership, ensuring strategic alignment and operational oversight.
- Roles and Responsibilities: Clearly defined roles for staff from both institutions to manage the partnership, including academic, administrative, and support roles.

Financial Arrangements

- Funding and Resource Sharing: Agreements must outline how costs will be shared, funding secured, and resources allocated.
- Tuition Fees: Clarification on whether fees are managed by one institution or split, ensuring transparency for students.

Dispute Resolution

- Mechanisms: Establish formal mechanisms for resolving disputes or disagreements that could arise, ensuring they do not adversely affect student education.

Regulatory Alignment: The policy strictly adheres to the OfS's regulatory framework, particularly focusing on conditions related to quality and standards, student protection, and transparency. This alignment is critical for maintaining the credibility and legality of the partnership.

Student-Centric Approach: By emphasising student outcomes and experiences, the policy reflects current trends in higher education where student satisfaction and success are paramount.

Risk Management: The policy incorporates risk management strategies, particularly through student protection plans, which are essential in a landscape where educational partnerships can be volatile.

- Sustainability and Flexibility: The policy is designed to be robust yet flexible, allowing for the evolution of the partnership while ensuring that changes do not compromise educational quality or regulatory compliance.
- Cultural Integration: Attention should be given to the cultural and academic integration of staff and students from both institutions to foster a true collaborative environment.

The End