Risks associated with particular types of collaborative and transnational education partnerships

1. Articulation arrangements

1.1 Overview
Under an articulation arrangement students generally enter Trinity by advanced entry to an existing Trinity award. This has the following benefits which reduce the risk of these arrangements as compared with other partnership types:

- Trinity has oversight of the quality of the student in their degree awarding years;
- The School or programme is aligned to Trinity’s quality assurance procedures;
- New course approval and/or academic regulations are not required.

1.2 Sample risks for input into the Risk Register

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Controls</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>That students entering under the agreement cannot meet prescribed academic standards due to poor English language competency.</td>
<td>College regulations with respect to English language competency. Additional support mechanisms may be implemented. For example, incorporation of an IELTS pathway programme, or additional preparation courses at the partner university into the contract.</td>
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<tr>
<td>That students entering under the agreement cannot meet prescribed academic standards due to mismatch between the curriculum taught at their home institution and the Trinity curriculum.</td>
<td>Rigorous curriculum mapping to ensure that students entering Trinity have met the necessary pre-requisites and achieved the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies in the years spent at their home institution.</td>
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<tr>
<td>That students entering under the agreement cannot meet prescribed academic standards due to the poor quality of students selected under the arrangement.</td>
<td>To ensure that appropriate eligibility requirements for students entering Trinity under the arrangement are specified in the contract and include admissions requirements based on Trinity policy, including what Grade Point Average (GPA) will define cut-off for eligibility.</td>
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<tr>
<td>That students entering under the agreement do not meet prescribed academic standards due to lack of progression or completion of programme requirements.</td>
<td>The contract should include exit and award arrangements for students who do not progress/complete.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That Trinity’s reputation or brand will be damaged due to poor controls of marketing or recruitment materials associated with the programme.</td>
<td>Reference to the use of the Trinity logo and branding in the contract, and in the review and approval processes for all marketing and recruitment materials prior to the commencement of any marketing campaign.</td>
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<tr>
<td>That anticipated student numbers are not realised under the arrangement due to:</td>
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  - Inadequate lead time to market to and recruit students;
  - Poor student demand for the programme;
  - Trinity being unable to reserve a sufficient number of places in designated programmes;
  - Immigration/visa application clearance processes; |
• Lack of capacity within Trinity to facilitate student entry and arrival, accommodation, orientation and induction.

**Controls:** Appropriate planning and timescales using the International Partnerships Toolkit, good quality marketing, effective communication between the School and Academic Registry and provision of information regarding accommodation provision and the cost of living in Dublin.

**Risk:** That the arrangement does not prove financially sustainable due to:
- Inadequate financial forecasting of distribution of costs across partners;
- Fluctuation in currency markets;
- Higher demand on Trinity staff to provide capacity building to partner institution than anticipated.

**Controls:** Careful due diligence in relation to financial costs, risks and benefits associated with the arrangement, allowance for consultancy costs to pay for capacity building.

**Risk:** That the value of the arrangement will be reduced due to lack of recognition of Trinity award by the relevant accreditation bodies, government agencies and employers in the partner jurisdiction.

**Controls:** Appropriate due diligence and curriculum mapping prior to the signing of the contract.

2. **Dual and Joint Programmes**

2.1 **Overview**
Dual and joint programmes are associated with a higher level of risk as the degree of integration and complexity is higher as compared with articulation or mobility arrangements.

2.2 **Sample risks for input into the Risk Register**

**Risk:** Delays in marketing, recruitment or commencement of the programme due to the requirement for approval of a new course proposal and/or academic regulations.

**Controls:** Appropriate planning and estimation of timeframes to ensure all due diligence and approval steps can be delivered as per the International Partnerships Toolkit.

**Risk:** Financial risk due to costs related to the development and delivery of the integrated programme and staff visits to conduct review of academic standards /curriculum mapping.

**Controls:** Careful attention to financial due diligence in the negotiation phase.

**Risk:** Poor execution of administrative arrangements due to:
- Inadequate breakdown of responsibilities in the contract;
- Inadequate monitoring of implementation of arrangements;
- Poor communication between partners;
- Inadequate capacity/resources to deliver against requirements.

**Controls:** Adequate understanding of capacity at both the partner institution and at Trinity to absorb additional administrative responsibilities. This should be considered throughout the due diligence process, site visits and with clear articulation of requirements in the contract.

**Risk:** Issues with the scheduling of award grants due to lack of arrangements for exit awards for students who do not meet requirements for progression or completion.

**Controls:** Arrangements for repeat students and students who fail to progress or complete to be included in the relevant contract.
**Risk:** Potential for breach of data protection and reporting accountabilities due to the need to transfer student data at point of registration, examination session completion, inclusion in Higher Education Authority (HEA) data transfer.

**Controls:** Clear articulation of data protection and transfer in the contract. Clear articulation of the census date, and dates for receipt of HEA data transfer, upload of examination and assessment results for Courts of Examiners, academic transcript and degree parchment production.

**Risk:** Issues with the protection and maintenance of academic standards due to:
- Lack of parity of degree classifications or grade equivalences;
- Lack of arrangements for internal and external examination of examination and assessment;
- Lack of shared understanding or approach to
  - academic integrity including plagiarism
  - academic appeals
  - grievance, disciplinary and student cases
  - quality assurance or accreditation requirements.

**Controls:** Careful consideration of the partner institution’s academic regulations and policies during the due diligence phase to inform the decision as to which partner should be the administrative hub, which partner’s academic regulations apply, necessary amendments to the contract and mapping of quality/accreditation requirements across both jurisdictions.

**Risk:** Dilution of value of the Trinity award due to the double counting of credit.

**Controls:** Careful consideration of this during the negotiation of the contract and review of curricula across the two awarding institutions.

**Risk:** That the Trinity award will not be recognised in the partner jurisdiction due to lack of incorporation of the relevant accreditation body, employers’ and government agencies’ requirements in the contract.

**Controls:** Appropriate due diligence prior to signing of the contract.

**Risk:** That quality assurance statutory requirements are not met or adhered to due to:
- Failure to assure national and partner institution quality assurance arrangements as part of due diligence phase;
- Failure to incorporate quality assurance annual monitoring and programme and periodic reviews in the contract;
- Failure to implement or monitor quality assurance arrangements and assure ability to meet statutory reporting.

**Controls:** Addressed through the submission of quality assurance policies and procedures in the due diligence phase, incorporation of a necessary clause in the contract and implementation of appropriate governance arrangements including quality assurance to oversee the partnership.
3. Joint Research (if to be formalised as part of the partnership arrangement)

3.1 Sample risks for input into the Risk Register

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk:</th>
<th>Poor research outcomes due to inadequate monitoring of student progress by supervisors in partner institutions.</th>
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<td>Controls:</td>
<td>Clear protocols as regards the frequency, standard and responsibility for supervision of students across the partner institutions.</td>
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<th>Risk:</th>
<th>Inadequate support for research due to a lack of identification or nomination of appropriate resources.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Controls:</td>
<td>Careful consideration of this within the negotiation phase which will include site visit to the partner institution and assessment of the research environment and resources available to students. Details of such support should be included in the contract.</td>
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<th>Issues regarding the appointment of examiners for the thesis due to lack of shared agreement of appointment requirements and clarity around responsibility.</th>
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<td>Controls:</td>
<td>Clear protocols across partner institutions on submission, examination and defence of the thesis.</td>
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