



Non-EU Collaborative and Transnational Education Partnerships Policy

1. Context

Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin, herein referred to as Trinity, in recognition of the benefits and opportunities arising from the increasing globalisation of higher education is committed to exploring mutually beneficial education and research collaborative arrangements with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) internationally.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to set out the University's approach to collaborative and transnational arrangements in line with its Strategic Plan (2014-19) and related strategies, and to outline the parameters for evaluating proposals for academic partnerships with non-EU HEIs.

3. Benefits

The policy facilitates the expansion of Trinity's collaborative and transnational agreements with non-EU Higher Education Institutions by providing direction to faculty and Schools in evaluating proposals and developing partnerships.

Collaborative partnerships increase the opportunities for student mobility and diversity in the student body, expand research opportunities for students and staff, enhance the University's higher education and research impact and foster innovation and excellence.

4. Scope

This policy applies to arrangements for Non-EU collaborative and transnational education partnerships at Trinity that result in articulation arrangements, abridged entry arrangements where there is recognition of credit between participating institutions, dual or joint programmes and/or awards, and to student and staff exchanges.

This policy does not apply to collaborative or transnational education partnership arrangements with EU, including Irish, partners.



5. Principles

All new collaborative and transnational education partnerships are guided by the following principles:

- 5.1 All agreements take full consideration and account of ethical, safety and political considerations and do not involve a partnership with, or in, any country which Ireland has disengaged diplomatic relations and/or is in a state of emergency or conflict.
- 5.2 Trinity, in consultation with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, will assess on a case-by-case basis all partnerships in countries that Ireland has disengaged diplomatic relations and/or is in a state of emergency or conflict and take necessary action.
- 5.3 Each proposed partnership will undergo due diligence (see 7.5 below) and decisions to engage in countries that Trinity does not have existing partnerships/relations will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- 5.4 The proposed partnership, including the terms of any of its agreements, precludes any endorsement by Trinity of any action that is illegal, discriminatory, limits freedom of inquiry, suppresses or falsifies academic research, or creates a conflict of interest or reputational harm for Trinity.

6. Definitions

6.1 Collaborative Provision

Collaborative Provision refers to two or more providers being involved by formal agreement in the provision of a programme of higher education and training.

6.2 Transnational Education (TNE)

Transnational Education is the provision or partial provision of a programme of education in one country by a designated awarding body based in another country.

6.3 Articulation Arrangement

An articulation arrangement is a process that enables students who satisfy academic criteria on one programme to be admitted with advanced standing to a subsequent stage of a programme of a different degree awarding body. These arrangements are subject to a formal agreement between the parties.

6.4 Due Diligence

Due Diligence is the undertaking of enquiries about a prospective collaborative and/or transnational arrangement to inform a decision on whether to proceed with a proposed partnership or inform the terms of a memorandum of understanding or contract.



6.5 Awarding Body/Institution

An awarding body/institution is an organisation which makes education awards.

7. Policy

7.1 Terms of Engagement

All non-EU academic partnerships will reflect the following terms of engagement:

- 7.1.1 The partnership adheres to Trinity's policies and regulations relating to collaborative and transnational education provision and complies with the Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Act.
- 7.1.2 The purposes of the partnership are consistent with Trinity's strategic plan and provide clear potential for reciprocal and mutual benefit.
- 7.1.3 The partner institution will be in good financial and legal standing.
- 7.1.4 Agreements will outline a protocol to protect the university brand by:
 - a. ensuring the partnership is compliant with Trinity's policies on intellectual property;
 - b. ensuring consistency with Trinity principles that govern research ethics, research publication and ownership;
 - c. ensuring the partnership is compliant with Trinity's financial policies;
 - d. including provision for the approval and monitoring of publicity, and the use of Trinity's full name, appropriate logo, or registered trademark as set out in the Visual Identity Guidelines available at <https://www.tcd.ie/local/identity/visual-identity/>
- 7.1.5 For articulation arrangements, where the language of instruction of the partner's programme is not through English, Trinity's minimum entry standard for English language competency will apply (IELTS 6.5). In the case of certain programmes where a higher level of English language competency is required, the programme specific standard will apply. Additional English language teaching and support models, if needed, will be mutually agreed between Trinity and the partner institution and may include English teaching support provided at the partner institution, at Trinity, or at both institutions.
- 7.1.6 Trinity does not normally enter into joint or dual programmes and/or award arrangements with other Higher Education Institutions where the language of delivery and assessment of the programme is not predominantly in English.



7.2 Strategic Considerations

The following strategic considerations will be taken into account in developing collaborative partnerships with overseas HEIs:

- 7.2.1 Institution-level agreements will normally be with peer institutions only.
- 7.2.2 For Faculty- or School-level agreements where the international ranking is not uniformly high, the partner institution will normally be internationally recognised in the discipline(s) concerned.
- 7.2.3 For emerging territories, each partner institution will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and a justification made to support the proposed partnership.
- 7.2.4 The financial and legal standing of the partner institution will be confirmed by Financial Services Division and the College Solicitor through provision of appropriate supporting documentation.

7.3 Academic Considerations

- 7.3.1 The academic standards and, where appropriate, awards of the proposed collaborative partner will be on par with Trinity's awards and consistent with the Irish National Qualification Framework level descriptors.
- 7.3.2 Articulation agreements are limited to the relevant programmes at the partner Higher Education Institution.
- 7.3.3 The partnership will comply with institutional and national quality assurance protocols.
- 7.3.4 Where professional and statutory body accreditation requirements apply to the Trinity programme, consideration will be given to whether these requirements apply to students entering under the partnership.

7.4 Student Experience

The following considerations relating to the student experience will be taken into account before engaging in a partnership:

- 7.4.1 The quality of the student experience and learning opportunities on proposed collaborative programmes will normally be on par with Trinity's and meet a minimum education standard;
- 7.4.2 The facilities provided for students in the proposed partner institution will meet a minimum standard, and, where appropriate, verified by Trinity through preliminary site visits to the proposed partner institution.



7.5 Formulating partnership arrangements

- 7.5.1 General and academic due-diligence will be carried out in respect of proposed collaborative and transnational partnerships. Different levels of due diligence will apply to different types of partnership arrangements.
- 7.5.2 All institutional agreements will pay due attention to the quality assurance and other external accreditation requirements of the relevant jurisdiction(s) of the partner institution(s) to ensure, where required, alignment with Irish professional and statutory regulations.
- 7.5.3 The impact (cost and capacity) of the proposed partnership on Trinity's resources, facilities and support services will be considered and appropriate arrangements put in place to assure sustainability of provision.
- 7.5.4 Faculty/Schools interested in engaging in collaborative partnerships will adhere to the instructions and guidelines for staff on how to evaluate and develop proposals for collaborative partnerships as set out in the Partnership Toolkit.
- 7.5.5 Trinity and its partner institution will agree, as appropriate and where possible:
 - a. marking schemes and degree classifications for assessment and awards;
 - b. intellectual property rights to teaching and learning materials and student work;
 - c. the content, design and timely distribution of marketing materials to enable recruitment in advance of admission deadlines for the programme;
 - d. new academic regulations for the programme, including procedures for academic appeals and complaints and criteria for admission, registration, examination, assessment, progression and graduation;
 - e. programme-specific English language requirements, where applicable, and not lower than Trinity's minimum standard for English language competency of IELTS 6.5 for entry;
 - f. exit routes for students who do not attain the full credit requirement for the programme/award;
 - g. procedures to be followed in the event of a termination of the arrangement, in particular the 'Protection of Enrolled Learners' under §6 QQI Act 2012;



- h. procedures for the establishment of examination boards including responsibility for nomination and meeting costs for external examiners;
- i. procedures for the exchange and protection of student records that comply with Irish legislation, i.e. Data Protection Acts (1988 and 2003) and comparable legislation in the partner jurisdiction.

7.6 Approval Process for Partnership Proposals

There are three levels to the approval process for Partnership Proposals, each level has an approval pathway and approved signatories (refer Toolkit).

Level	Partnership Description	Pathway for consideration / approval
Level 1	Major Institutional-level Commitment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term (up to 7 years) • Multidimensional i.e. including Consultancy such as capacity building; Academic Programmes; Funded Positions; Staff and Student Exchange. • Multi-School/Discipline • Significant financial return 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning Group - Executive officers - Finance Committee - College Board
Level 2	Academic Programmes subject to an Agreement/Framework i.e. Memorandum of Agreements, Articulation Agreements and abridged entry arrangements leading to a Trinity credit and/or Award.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GRO-TTL¹ - International Committee (IC) - Undergraduate Studies/ Graduate Studies Committee, as appropriate - University Council
Level 3	Smaller collaborations e.g. Student and Staff Exchanges (non-EU and reciprocal), short-term programmes that are non-credit bearing etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department and School Executive - GRO-TTL

¹ GRO-TTL (Global Relations Office and Trinity Teaching & Learning) monthly meetings



8. Responsibility

The responsibility for this policy lies with the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and the Vice-Provost Global Relations.

9. Related Policies

- 9.1 *Joint and Dual Awards Policy*
- 9.2 *Programme Design and Approval Policy and Procedures*
- 9.3 *Education Agents Policy*
- 9.4 *Study Abroad Providers Policy*
- 9.5 *Accreditation by Professional and Statutory Bodies*
- 9.6 *Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy*

10. Supporting Documents

- 10.1 *Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision at [IHEQN Guidelines Collaborative Provision](#)*
- 10.2 *QQI Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards at [QQI Policy on Collaborative and Joint Awards](#)*
- 10.3 *NARIC Ireland: Advice on the Recognition of Foreign Qualifications at www.qqi.ie*
- 10.4 *Data Protection Acts (1988 and 2003)*
- 10.5 *Toolkit on Collaborative and Transnational Education Partnerships [at website link](#)*

11. Document Control

Date of approval: 8th June 2016 by Council

Date of next review: Academic Year 2018-19