PARTNERSHIPS

Opinion and Recommendation Classification

A Substantial level of assurance can be given to the adequacy and effectiveness of systems of internal control for Partnerships at the time of our audit and limited to the scope. Substantial assurance is defined as, “While there is a basically a sound system, there are weaknesses which put some of the system objectives at risk, and/or there is evidence that the level of non-compliance with some of the controls may put some of the system objectives at risk”.

As a result of our audit, the following recommendations have been raised.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priority One</td>
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<tr>
<td>Priority Two</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Priority Three</td>
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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Partnerships as a term encompasses all collaborative activity except validation. Partnership provision usually involves the award of City, University of London credit or awards.

1.2 Partnerships include joint programmes, articulation arrangements, franchised provision and off-site delivery of City’s programmes.

1.3 The University’s President, advised by the Executive Committee, has ultimate responsibility for the strategic direction of partnerships. The Deputy President and Provost has delegated authority for overseeing the quality and standards of all programmes, including those offered through partnership. Deans of Schools have responsibility for partnership provision within each of their Schools, with Boards of Studies overseeing matters of quality and standards.

1.4 Each partnership has an Academic Partnership Coordinator who will report to the Lead Partnership Coordinator of the relevant School who is responsible for ensuring that the partnership programme is represented at the relevant Board of Studies. The Lead Partnership Coordinator will be a senior member of School academic or professional services staff who will be responsible to the Dean of School for the effective oversight and integration of partnership provision within their School.¹

1.5 The collaborative provision register for 2016-17 shows that there are a total of 1,129 students studying on various partnership courses with 30 different partner institutions both within the UK and internationally.²

1.6 The five partnerships reviewed in the sample include:

- Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) - MSc Air Transport Management, MSc Air Safety Management, MSc Aircraft Maintenance Management
- KAIST, Korea - MSc Real Estate, MSc in Insurance and Risk Management, MSc in Shipping, Trade and Finance, MSc in Energy, Trade and Finance, MSc in Supply Chain, Trade and Finance, MSc Quantitative Finance, MSc Financial Mathematics, MSc, Mathematical Trading and Finance, MSc Investment Management.
- City and Islington College - Foundation Degree in Ophthalmic Dispensing
- University of Aarhus - Erasmus Mundus Masters Journalism and Media within Globalisation: The European Perspective
- Lloyd’s Register (Hellenic Lloyd’s SA) - LLM Maritime Law

AUDIT SCOPE AND APPROACH

2.1 The audit approach was to develop an assessment of risks and management controls operating within each area of the scope.

2.2 The Audit will include the review of the performance monitoring and reporting arrangements and will include the following areas:

- Governance and institutional oversight;
- Board of Studies and programme oversight;
- Compliance with the Memorandum of Agreement and University policies and procedures;
- Reporting to the Dean; and
- Student engagement and feedback.

¹ Information extracted from the Partnerships Policy, available on the staff intranet http://www.city.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/68985/partnerships_policy.pdf
² Data extracted from the Register of Collaborative Provision 2016/17
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3.1 Key Controls Identified

- **Collaborative Provision Committee** – Senate has recently approved the creation of the new Collaborative Provision Committee to replace the Validation and Institutional Partnerships Committee and Partnerships Sub-Committee of Education and Student Committee. The CPC will be a sub-committee of Senate and will focus on all provision.

- **APEs** – Annual Programme Evaluations (APEs) were carried out for each of the partnerships. For four of the partnerships, a separate APE just for the partnership programme was produced. APEs are evaluated by the Board of Studies (BoS). **Memorandum of Agreements** – These exist for each of the partnerships, although for the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) partnership, it is still in draft form awaiting final comment from the School. The draft has therefore not had approval from senior management. Approved Memorandum of Agreement templates exist for each type of partnership, ensuring consistency and assurance that key details will be included and these have been recently updated to include the new City, University of London logo.

- **APC and LPC existence and seniority** - There is an Academic Partnership Coordinator (APC) for each Partnership in the sample and Lead Partnership Co-ordinators (LPCs) for each School and they all are of the expected and appropriate seniority, as stated in the role profiles.

- **Student feedback policy applies to partnerships** – This policy “will apply to partnership provision unless equivalent alternative arrangements have been specifically agreed between City and the partner institution. Details will be included the Memorandum of Agreement for the partnership and student handbooks”.

- **Code of practice for student representation** – This states that it applies to partnership provision unless agreed otherwise. This document outlines roles and the principles and good practice guidelines to ensure that student representation exists for all students regardless of which course they are on.

- **BoS meetings monitor and review student feedback** - The latest BoS minutes reviewed for each School contain information and discussion on student feedback through the reporting and analysis of various student surveys, APEs and the student voice section which is a standing item in each of the meetings.

3.2 Key Issues Identified

- **Guidance and policies not recently reviewed** – The Collaborative Provision Typology document on the intranet was last reviewed in June 2012. Whilst there is a Register of Collaborative Provision for 2016-17, the register currently accessible on the intranet is for 2015-16. The partnerships policy is available on the staff intranet but was last updated on 13.3.13 where Senate approved the updates. There are detailed and tailored clear role profile matrices for the APC and the LPC but the newly updated APC matrix is not yet on the intranet at the time of the audit. Only the APC version that was updated in 2013 is. The code of practice for student representation was approved in September 2009 with no revision/review date visible.

- **SHS BoS and programme committee minutes** – The most recent SHS BoS meeting minutes that were provided to Senate are from 30.6.16. There was a meeting on 22.11.16 but the minutes for this meeting were not given to Senate at its meeting in March 2017. Senate has received the minutes for the other Schools' latest BoS meetings. The most recent meeting minutes provided for the Foundation Degree in Ophthalmic Dispensing programme committee was dated 10.6.16.

- **SMCSE programme committees reporting to BoS** - The SMCSE's BoS received information on the UG programme committee only in one of the last four BoS meeting minutes reviewed (18.1.17) and the PG programme committees were not mentioned at all in any of the four meetings.
• **APC annual report** – The APC annual report was completed for four of the five partnership programmes but was not completed for the Air Transport programmes at DIFC in Dubai (although there are plans to start producing it). Two of the four completed reports were reviewed/received by the BoS. From the minutes for the other two School BoS’, it was not minuted that they have seen the reports.

• **Contents of Memorandum of Agreements (MoAs)** – It was identified that for one of the partnership programmes (Dubai DIFC), there was no clear detail on the responsibilities and obligations of the University and of each ‘partner’ but there were sections in the agreement that mention equipment and enrolled students. In the same agreement, the APC was not identified at all, only the Deputy President and Provost was. The other four agreements include the APCs’ details.

• **Memorandum of Agreement verification** – Evidence that the University’s legal team or Procurement team had overseen the agreements before finalisation and suggested any improvements or necessary amendments to ensure agreements were effective was not available for one out of the five agreements in the sample (Foundation Degree Ophthalmic Dispensing). For another partnership (Dubai DIFC), the agreement was taken forward via another team and not Student and Academic Services (SaAS), so they did not undertake the final review and do not have confirmation of legal or Procurement verification.

• **Operational schedules in MoAs** – These did not all outline the feedback process for each partnership. One of the five MoAs has an operational schedule which clearly outlines feedback processes. Another does not have an operational schedule but does mention feedback processes. One has an operational schedule but it does not mention feedback processes, although there is a very brief mention of City being responsible for quality assurance and academic standards. The other two MoAs do not have operational schedules due to the nature of the partnerships and they only briefly mention that City is responsible for the academic standards and quality. Therefore, three out of five MoA operational schedules do not mention in detail the feedback process for the partnerships.
Detailed Recommendations

4.1 Guidance and Policies

Rationale

Partnership related documentation available to staff to help guide and inform them such as policies, guidance notes, registers and codes should be regularly reviewed and updated where necessary, so that they are accurate, relevant and contain the correct information.

It was identified that there are various documents that have not been recently updated or updated documents that have not yet been made accessible to staff. The Collaborative Provision Typology document on the intranet was last revised in June 2012. Whilst there is a Register of Collaborative Provision for 2016-17, the register currently accessible to staff on the intranet is for 2015-16. The Partnerships Policy is available on the staff intranet but was last updated on 13.3.13 where Senate approved the updates. There are detailed and tailored clear role profile matrices for the APC and the LPC but the newly updated APC matrix is not yet on the intranet at the time of the audit. Only the APC matrix that was updated in 2013 is published. The code of practice for student representation was approved in September 2009 with no revision/review date visible.

There is an increased risk that if documentation used as references and to provide information for staff is not accurate, updated and correct, staff will receive incorrect information which can then affect their actions and how the partnerships are run. Partnerships therefore may not be run as per the policies and guidance.

Recommendation

Student and Academic Services should review all of the documentation/information relating to partnerships and update them where necessary so they are accurate and correct. The updated information should be placed on the intranet as soon as possible so staff can access the correct information immediately.

Priority

Two

Management Response

A schedule for reviewing the Collaborative Provision Typology and the Partnerships Policy will be established. Changes to these documents require Senate approval.

The latest versions of the Register of Collaborative Provision and the APC role profiles have been published on the website. In future, a check will be made periodically to ensure that the latest versions of approved documents are published on the website.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Target Date</th>
<th>December 2017 for schedule for review</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Validation and Partnerships Manager</th>
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4.2 SHS BoS and programme committee minutes

**Rationale**

The Boards of Studies (BoS) meeting minutes in each School should be all regularly presented to Senate as Senate’s responsibilities include assuring academic quality and standards and assuring itself that student satisfaction is appropriately monitored. The BoS terms of reference and composition regulations states that “Boards of Studies are required to meet three times per year, or more frequently as appropriate”.

It was identified that the most recent School of Health Sciences BoS meeting minutes that were provided to Senate are from the meeting on 30.6.16. There was another meeting on 22.11.16 but the minutes were not presented to Senate at its meeting in March 2017. Senate has received the minutes for the other Schools’ latest BoS meetings.

There is an increased risk that if Senate does not receive and review each of the minutes from the BoS in detail and if programme committees do not meet regularly, they will not receive important information relating to events in the Schools, various programmes including the partnerships, standards and quality and cannot make approvals where necessary.

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<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
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<tr>
<td>The School of Health and Sciences BoS and the programme committee for the partnership should ensure that they meet at least three times a year and that the minutes of the meetings are documented and the BoS minutes are presented to Senate as soon as possible.</td>
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**Management Response**

Response from the School of Health Sciences: The risk highlighted that the last set of BoS minutes provided to Senate were from the 30/06/2016 meeting, noting that another meeting took place on the 22/11/2016. However we can confirm the minutes for the 22/11/2016 meeting were presented to S&AS, whereby the minutes should have been presented to Senate along with the other Schools

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<th>Chair of BOS</th>
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### Rationale

The Boards of Studies Terms of Reference and Composition Regulation document states that Boards of Studies must assure the academic quality and standards of provision by reviewing reports or minutes from Programme Committees. The Programme Committees’ Terms of Reference and Composition Regulation document states that Programme Committees are responsible to the Board of Studies for managing the day-to-day academic quality and standards of provision.

It was identified that the School of Mathematics Computer Science and Engineering's (SMCSE’s) BoS received information on the UG programme committees only in one of the last four BoS meeting minutes reviewed (18.1.17) and the PG programme committees minutes were not received at all in any of the four meetings.

There is an increased risk that without the Boards of Studies receiving and reviewing each of the minutes from the Programmes Committees in detail, they will not receive important information relating to the various programmes including the partnership programmes and therefore will not have an understanding of progress, issues or problems that may arise.

### Recommendation

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<tr>
<td>The Chair of the SMCSE Board of Studies should ensure that they receive and review each of the Programmes Committees minutes and explicitly review each of the Programme Committee minutes for partnership programmes. This should be recorded in the Boards of Studies meeting minutes.</td>
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### Management Response

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<td>Chair of the SMCSE BoS</td>
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4.4 APC annual report

Rationale

The Partnership Approval and Management Process guidance document on the staff intranet states that “Academic Partnership Coordinators are required to complete an annual report for each partnership they oversee and this report should be appended to the APE form for that programme for consideration by the School Board of Studies.” Therefore, an annual report should be produced for each partnership by the APC and received by the Board of Studies (BoS).

It was identified that the APC annual report was completed for four of the five partnership programmes in the sample but was not completed for the DIFC partnership in Dubai at the time of the audit (although there are plans to start producing it). Two of the four completed reports were received by the relevant BoS. From the minutes for the other two School BoS (SASS and SHS), it was not evident that they have considered the reports as they were not mentioned or included in the minutes (only one set of SHS BoS meeting minutes was provided).

There is an increased risk that if the annual report is not completed by the APC and considered by the BoS, the BoS will not receive an update on how the programme was managed over the past year including details on the visits to the partner, whether the APC has completed all of its applicable duties with regards to the partnership, if any developments have taken place or if there are any concerns or areas of support required. If the BoS is not aware of any issues or support required, it cannot help and therefore problems could continue leading to an ineffective partnership being run and potentially dissatisfied staff and students, causing reputational damage.

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<tr>
<td>The Chairs of the Board of Studies should ensure that APCs complete an annual report and submit to the BoS. The BoS should require Lead Partnership Co-ordinators to check and ensure that BoS receive and consider the annual reports from the APCs for all of the partnerships.</td>
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Management Response

Response from the School of Health Sciences: The risk notes that it was not evident that BoS had considered the reports from the APC as it was not noted in the minutes. However we can confirm additional minutes can be provided evidencing that our APC reports are discussed at the School's BoS.

Response from Alison Edridge: The newly established Collaborative Provision Committee will monitor completion of APEs and APCs for partnership provision. This will be completed by the end of 2017/18 for reporting related to the 2016/17 academic year.

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<tr>
<td>July 2018</td>
<td>Validation and Partnerships Manager</td>
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4.5 Contents of Memorandum of Agreements

Rationale

The Partnership Approval and Management Process guidance document on the staff intranet states that the “Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) is a legally binding document which sets out the terms and details of the partnership arrangement. The MoA will also contain an Operational Schedule which sets out, in detail, the framework within which the partnership shall be developed, delivered and monitored”. The MoAs should therefore contain the responsibilities and obligations of the University and the partners, including key contacts such as the APC.

It was identified that for one of the partnership programmes (DIFC in Dubai), there was no clear detail on the responsibilities and obligations of the University and of each ‘partner’ but there were sections in the agreement that mention equipment and enrolled students. In the same agreement, the APC was not identified at all, only the Deputy President and Provost was identified. The other four agreements include the APCs’ details.

There is an increased risk that if the legally binding MoAs do not define responsibilities and obligations of each party, key duties and tasks may not be completed and disagreements could occur if neither party believes it is their role to fulfil them. This can lead to an ineffective partnership being run causing dissatisfied students and staff and leading to reputational and subsequent financial damage.

Recommendation

The MoAs should be reviewed and amended/updated to include the principal responsibilities and obligations of the University and the partners and include the details of the APC so the key contact is made clear.

Management Response

Response from Alison Edridge: Student and Academic Services will work with the International Partnerships and Development Office, which managed the finalisation of the DIFC MoA, to revise the MoA in line with University expectations for off-site partnership delivery.

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# Memorandum of Agreement verification

## Rationale

To ensure that the Memorandums of Agreement for each partnership programme are accurate, adequate, appropriate and safeguard the University’s interests, professional advice should be sought to review and suggest improvements if applicable to the agreement before they are finalised and approved.

It was identified that there was no evidence that the University’s legal team or Procurement team had overseen the agreements before finalisation and suggested any improvements or necessary amendments to ensure agreements were effective, for one out of the five agreements in the sample (FDOD).

For another partnership (Dubai DIFC), the agreement was taken forward via another team and not Student and Academic Services, so they did not undertake the final review and do not have confirmation of legal or Procurement verification.

There is an increased risk that if not all agreements have been reviewed before approval to ensure they are appropriate and safeguard the University’s interests, the University could enter into unfavourable and inappropriate agreements giving rise to potential disagreements which could damage the University’s reputation and therefore cause financial damage.

## Recommendation

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<tr>
<td>Student and Academic Services should ensure that each of the agreements are reviewed by either the University’s Procurement team before they are finalised. Advice should be sought by either team to clarify any misunderstandings and ensure that the agreements are aligned with the University and its interests.</td>
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## Management Response

Student and Academic Services will ensure that any agreements it is responsible for are reviewed by the Procurement team prior to finalisation in future.

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4.7 Operational schedules in MoAs

Rationale

The Partnership Approval and Management Process guidance document on the staff intranet states that the “Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) will also contain an Operational Schedule which sets out, in detail, the framework within which the partnership shall be developed, delivered and monitored.” Therefore, each MoA should contain a clear Operational Schedule highlighting how the partnership will be managed and include information such as the feedback process as part of the monitoring.

It was identified that the MoAs in the sample did not all outline the feedback process for each partnership. One of the five MoAs has an operational schedule which clearly outlines feedback processes. Another does not have an operational schedule but does mention feedback processes. One has an operational schedule but it does not mention feedback processes, although there is a very brief mention of City being responsible for quality assurance and academic standards. The other two MoAs do not have operational schedules due to the nature of the partnerships and they only briefly mention that City is responsible for the academic standards and quality. Therefore, three out of five MoA operational schedules do not mention in detail the feedback process for the partnerships.

There is an increased risk that without operational schedules in the MoAs that define the feedback process, there will be uncertainty and a lack of agreed processes to monitor the partnership and ensure feedback can be provided. This can lead to dissatisfaction and discontentment if issues are not improved or resolved and potential disagreements if agreed processes are not defined. This ultimately leads to reputational damage.

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<tr>
<td>The MoAs should be reviewed and amended/updated to ensure they all include an operational schedule stating how the partnership will be developed, delivered and monitored. It should also include the feedback processes for the partnerships with roles and responsibilities laid out.</td>
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Management Response

The need for an Operational Schedule in the MoA is dependent on the type of partnership, and some MoAs include all required details in the main body of the agreement. Similarly, the need for detailed information on feedback processes within an MoA is dependent on the nature of the partnership.

MoAs will be reviewed to determine whether the addition of an Operational Schedule and/or detailed information on feedback processes is required for the type of partnership. The outcome of this review will be documented and any required amendments to MoAs will then be taken forward.

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<td>December 2017 for completion of review</td>
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Assurance Definitions and Priority Levels

In order to assist management in using our reports:

a) We categorise our opinions according to our assessment of the controls in place and the level of compliance with these controls.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assurance</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Full Assurance</strong></td>
<td>There is a sound system of control designed to achieve the system objectives and the controls are being consistently applied.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Substantial Assurance</strong></td>
<td>While there is a basically sound system, there are weaknesses which put some of the system objectives at risk, and/or there is evidence that the level of non-compliance with some of the controls may put some of the system objectives at risk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Limited Assurance</strong></td>
<td>Weaknesses in the system of controls are such as to put the system objectives at risk, and/or the level of non-compliance puts the system objectives at risk.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>No Assurance</strong></td>
<td>Control is generally weak, leaving the system open to significant error or abuse, and/or significant non-compliance with basic controls leaves the system open to error or abuse.</td>
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b) We categorise our recommendations according to their level of priority.

- **Priority 1**  
  Critical business risk not being adequately addressed; weaknesses in key business control; substantial non-conformance with regulations and accepted standards.

- **Priority 2**  
  Important business issues to be addressed; improvement area; inadequate risk identification or reduction; non-conformance with regulations.

- **Priority 3**  
  Minor non-conformances with the business management system; other business issues to be addressed, good working practices.