

**The Liaison Document**

**[course name]**

**[partner name]**

**Draft X – Date**

*This is a template for a liaison document that should set out, in clear language and succinctly, arrangements for liaison between SGUL and the partner institution in a number of areas. The document should be populated in discussion with the partner. When complete and agreed it will form part of the validation documentation, inform the drafting of the legal agreement, and be a standing document for use by staff across both organisations as appropriate to understand responsibilities and requirements. For each of the sections, responsibilities should be agreed between the institutions. Not all sections will be relevant to all forms of agreement and this list is not exhaustive and may be supplemented.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| This arrangement leads to the award(s) of: | Degree title (and related awards) |
| The managing SGUL institute is: |  |
| Awarding Body/Bodies: | Either or both parties |
| Qualification characteristics: | e.g. distance learning, concurrent |
| The provision described in this Liaison Document is: | Validated/franchised/contracted (see Quality Manual) |

1. **Introduction**

This document is concerned with the liaison arrangements for the delivery of the XXX. The purpose of the course is XXXXXXXXX

The liaison document complements the validation documentation (see Quality Manual Section A). The institutional Agreement between XXX and XXX provides the legal and financial underpinning for the validation arrangement.

Two of the key people involved in the management of the liaison are the Academic Liaison Tutor (ALT) at SGUL and the XXX at XXX. Detailed descriptions of their responsibilities are given in Section XXX of this document.

1. **Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions**

Consider:

* overall responsibility for marketing and recruitment strategy and delivery, brand signoff and ongoing management and monitoring of recruitment and marketing activity
* admissions policy, entry criteria, management of the admissions process, considering appeals
* operational management of processes if this differs
* (see also section 7)

1. **Enrolment**

Consider:

* Registering the students, enrolment, student data captured at enrolment and updating this, consistent with requirements for external reporting

1. **Induction & Transition – Students**

Consider:

* design and delivery of the induction programme that includes practical, academic and social elements that will ensure that new students understand what is expected of them and are able to make best use of the learning opportunities on offer
* induction programme includes a session that explains the role of SGUL in the programme and the relevance of that role to students. This session may include:
  + the history, leadership and structure of St George’s
  + students’ status as enrolled students of St George’s
  + regulatory frameworks for the MSc
  + the role of St George’s in assessment
  + the role of St George’s in quality assurance
  + St George’s role as an awarding body

1. **Tuition fees**

Consider:

* tuition fee matters, including setting fees, fee collection and debt management

The Financial Schedule of the Institutional Agreement outlines how financial aspects of the management of the Agreement are managed, including any fees or payments between the institutions.

1. **Course Administration**

Consider:

* Students are informed of the dates and process of enrolment and induction.
* Students receive handbooks (or their equivalent) that correspond to SGUL norms.
* Timetables are compiled and suitable teaching accommodation is booked.
* Students have access to pastoral and learning support.
* A course committee with appropriate student representation is convened.
* Assessment board meetings are organised and arranged in a timely manner.
* All the necessary documentation is prepared ahead of the assessment boards and that the draft and approved minutes from these meetings are compiled and circulated accordingly.
* Students are informed of their module and course results and any reassessment requirements.
* Students are aware of their rights to appeal.
* Students are aware of their rights to complain.

1. **Published Information**

Consider:

* marketing for the programme
* ensuring that any information relating to the programme on the institution’s website and in other promotional and marketing material including course leaflets and prospectuses is factually correct and complies with the terms of the Institutional Agreement between the institutions, sign off processes

The Institutional Agreement may include a Schedule relating to marketing, management of brand and logos etc.

1. **Executive Group(s)**

Consider:

* groups or committees to provide academic oversight (if any in addition to any existing groups or committees)
* groups to provide strategic oversight of the Institutional Agreement and the relationship between the two institutions. Whether an overarching steering group is required, with subgroups for operational oversight, or just one liaison group required, in addition to any academic or quality assurance groups (including integration with existing St George’s frameworks) and any short term implementation groups
* Detail here membership, chair, clerking support, summary Terms of Reference, frequency of meetings

1. **External Examiners**

As an awarding body, SGUL is responsible for the appointment, induction and payment of the external examiners for XXXXX. The responsibilities of external examiners are documented in SGUL’s Quality Manual.

SGUL expects external examiners to advise SGUL on whether the standards set are appropriate, that the conclusions reached by internal examiners are fair and equitable, and that approved procedures have been followed. The external examiner must therefore provide a formal written report to the Vice-Chancellor of SGUL. Following receipt, the report will be distributed to XXX who will prepare a formal response.

Following confirmation of appointment, a contract letter will be issued to the external examiner by SGUL in accordance with the Quality Manual processes. The external will be invited to SGUL’s induction event in November in the UK. Local induction of the external examiner will be arranged by XXXX.

Consider:

* responsibility for identifying suitably qualified external examiner(s)
* offering advice on the likely suitability of potential externals, expectations of the role and approval pathways
* formal nomination of the external examiner in accordance with Section I of the SGUL Quality Manual
* responsibility for all operational arrangements including the arrangements to enable the external to inspect and review a sample of moderated work submitted by the students. This must be done before the Examination Board and will include travel and accommodation arrangements.
* How the EE report and response is made available to the students

1. **Roles and Responsibilities**

There should be a lead academic contact for the programme from SGUL, usually called the Academic Liaison Tutor. The partner should appoint an equivalent role so that the two can work together to form a direct communication channel between the partners with the primary purpose of ensuring the smooth and effective running of the programme. The specific roles and responsibilities of these two appointments are listed below.

The Academic Liaison Tutor:

* Represents SGUL on all local committees, boards and groups including the Course Committee and the Board of Examiners.
* Ensures the effective flow of necessary information between the Course Committee and SGUL committees by, for example, providing periodic reports to committees.
* Advises the Chair of the Board of Examiners and facilitates the preparatory work for the Board, including liaison, as required, with External Examiners
* Undertakes day to day links with partner lead contact and ensures that appropriate lines of communication are established to enable the free-flow of information and feed-back.
* Acts as the SGUL senior academic responsible for advising the partner of the requirements of SGUL’s annual programme monitoring and periodic review processes.
* Acts as the SGUL senior academic responsible for the implementation of such quality assurance procedures as may be specified from time to time for the collaboration.
* Ensures, with the assistance of the partner contact, that all proposed modifications to programmes and their constituent modules are considered by the Course Committee prior to formal consideration with SGUL’s academic governance structures.
* Safeguard the interests of students on programme.
* Safeguard the academic coherence of the programme.

The partner liaison officer:

* Ensures students are provided with an appropriate timetable for the delivery of the programme
* Chairs the Course Committee.
* Prepares and presents appropriate reports, minutes of local committee meetings and other relevant documentation to the ALT;
* Ensures that all grades presented to the appropriate Board of Examiners are correct.
* Ensures that all requests for mitigating circumstances are considered.
* Maintains regular contact with the ALT and attend formal or informal meetings as requested.
* Informs the ALT about any significant changes in the resources available for the programme and any new resource requirements.
* Implements SGUL Quality Assurance procedures.

SGUL will also nominate a lead administrative officer to facilitate academic processes with relevant teams and to support the ALT.

1. **Liaison Visits**

The formal requirements for the ALT to visit the partner may include:

* Welcome and Induction (Start of each course)
* Course Committee meetings
* Board of Examiners meeting

Visits outside of the formal meeting attendance take place as required and are agreed in advance between the ALT and ULO.

1. **Liaison with Professional & Statutory Bodies (PSRBs)**

Consider:

* Day to day liaison with the PSRB
* The organisation of visits or inspections
* Responding to the outcomes of visits/inspections
* Arrangements for notifying the ALT of the outcomes of visits/inspections
* Notifying the ALT of material issues as they arise.

1. **Access to Resources**

Consider:

* resources students can access at each institution including student specialist support services, physical library (and borrowing rights), computing facilities, e-resources and access to e-databases, email, portals, VLEs, teaching rooms, students union

1. **Student support and the Personal Tutor Scheme**

St George’s Personal Tutor Scheme has a role in enhancing and monitoring students’ academic development and in ensuring that students are able to make the most of the learning opportunities available to them. Personal Tutors provide academic advice and guidance and are a conduit to more specialized or expert support services available at SGUL or elsewhere for example when health, personal and financial difficulties are interfering with a student’s ability to study. Personal tutoring complements the processes for providing academic or course-specific advice which is usually provided by teaching teams in the first instance.

There is no expectation that SGUL Personal Tutor Scheme will be adopted in its exact form for students on XXX. However, there is an expectation that equivalent and appropriate support structures will be in place and communicated clearly to students on XXX. Student support arrangements including learning support will be documented in the course document and their effectiveness will be monitored through the processes for student evaluation and through annual programme monitoring.

1. **Provision delivered or assessed in a language other than English**

The programme is delivered and assessed in English. If not, this should be documented, including availability of language support.

1. **Preparation of assessments (coursework and examinations)**

Consider:

* Allocating responsibilities for the management of assessment.
* Ensuring that all staff involved in assessment are appropriately trained.
* Preparation of assessment tasks, both coursework and examination.
* Preparation of assessment criteria and marking schemes.
* Arrangements for the internal moderation of all assessed work.
* External examiner engagement in assessment.
* Feedback to students on their performance in assessed work.
* Standard setting for clinical or practical examinations.
* Blueprinting or similar mechanisms.

The maintenance of the standard of the St George’s award depends on the effectiveness, validity and reliability of assessment. The ALT will have oversight of each stage of the assessment process to ensure compatibility with SGUL norms. The nature of this oversight will be discussed and agreed by the partner and the ALT.

1. **External examiner scrutiny of draft assessments**

Consider:

* ensuring external examiners are able to comment on any assessment prior to the distribution to students
* feeding back comments and replies
* security requirements
* the management of these processes

1. **Examinations**

Consider:

* venue booking, organisation and costs
* venue set up, security
* invigilation

1. **Marking**

Consider:

* policy and framework for marking practice (e.g. double marking, anonymity)
* managing the process including training of any external markers
* quality assurance and administrative arrangements
* security

1. **Moderation of Student Work**

Moderation of student work is the process of checking that the assessment and grade criteria for a component of assessment have been accurately, consistently and fairly applied by the first markers(s). The moderation must be properly documented and the relevant paperwork available for scrutiny by the ALT and External Examiners.

Consider:

* policy and approach
* resource requirements and training
* managing differences

1. **Feedback on Assessment**

Formal grades and feedback should be provided to the students in a timely manner. Students do not have to wait for the assessment to be moderated, however they must be aware that the final moderated grade may be reviewed if necessary.

Consider:

* feedback policy and turnaround times
* feedback pro formas and constructive feedback
* release of interim results

1. **Board of Examiners**

Boards of Examiners are established by the Senate and are accountable to Senate for the fulfilment of their terms of reference. Only an approved Board is authorised to assess students in accordance with the Programme Regulations and Scheme of Assessment.

The main functions of the Board are:

* To agree grades/marks for all students.
* To agree recommendations for awards and/or progression.
* To be responsible for the academic standards of modules, programmes and awards.
* In the case of failure, to agree reassessment requirements and, where necessary, the termination of registration.
* To ensure that all decisions are in compliance with the regulations of SGUL and XXX as appropriate and, where discretion is allowed, ensure that discretion is exercised fairly and consistently.

Reassessment boards are subsidiary boards of assessment boards. Minutes are taken at all reassessment boards detailing the decisions and actions taken. The assessment board shall subsequently confirm, normally under matters arising, actions taken on its behalf. External examiners have the right to attend reassessment boards; however, it is not a requirement that an external examiner must attend a reassessment board.

Consider:

* location of Board, membership, Chair
* administrative support
* timeframe and assessment calendar
* external examiner involvement
* quoracy

1. **Assessment – Other**

SGUL’s preferred online electronic system for assessment processing is Turnitin. Turnitin enables assessments to be submitted remotely, enables anonymous marking and enables assessment to be screened for plagiarism. Whilst there is no SGUL policy requiring submitted assessment to be marked online, there is an encouragement for feedback and grades to be returned to students electronically.

1. **Mitigating Circumstances and Extensions**

Each student is responsible for submitting coursework and attending examinations in accordance with the published assessment calendar.

Consider:

processes for mitigation and deferring assessment

approval of mitigating circumstances

1. **Fitness to Study or Practise**

Consider:

* does the programme require fitness to practise procedures (PSRB requirement) or fitness to study (internal requirement)
* committee structures for managing investigations and procedures
* disclosure issues with partner institution

1. **Academic Misconduct**

Allegations of academic misconduct will be investigated in accordance with SGUL’s Procedure for considering allegations of cheating or other assessment irregularity.

Consider:

* delegation of authority of early stages of procedures to XXX, detail
* legal costs and support
* location of hearings and costs

1. **Appeals (representation)**

SGUL uses the term “representation” to describe a request from a student for the decision of a Board of Examiners to be reviewed. SGUL’s General Regulations set out the grounds for appeal. A detailed procedure (Procedure for representations from assessment candidates) explains how representations are heard.

Consider:

* delegation of authority of early stages of procedures to XXX, detail
* legal costs and support

1. **Student Complaints**

Students will have the right to raise any concerns that they may have about the provision of the programme or the facilities or support services. Concerns will be considered in accordance with SGUL’s Student Complaints Procedure.

Consider:

* delegation of authority of early stages of procedures to XXX, detail
* legal costs and support

1. **Student disciplinary procedures**

Students are informed of what constitutes as disciplinary behaviour and the procedures that will be applied where unacceptable behaviour occurs. SGUL’s Student Disciplinary Procedure will provide the framework for investigating possible breaches of discipline. The procedure allows for misconduct related to the use of facilities (e.g. the Library, Computing Services and social and recreational facilities) to be considered at the local level by the manager responsible for the service or facility (in accordance with the codes of conduct for that service).

Consider:

* delegation of authority of early stages of procedures to XXX
* legal costs and support
* managing suspension (Principal approval required) pending investigation
* safety of student and others

1. **Student engagement**

SGUL and XXX have a shared commitment to working collaboratively with all students to enhance the quality of learning opportunities. A number of policies and practices are in place to facilitate student engagement and these include, and are not limited to,

* Student representation on course committees
* The student (course or year rep) system
* Student evaluation of modules and programmes
* Institutional Surveys

Consider:

* each mechanism for the programme, which are appropriate, run by whom
* responding to student feedback, which routes

1. **Student Representatives on the Course Committee**

A Course Committee will be established as a forum in which staff and students are able to discuss issues about the general health of the programme and share ideas about ways in which the programme might be improved. Course Committees hold formal meetings, agendas are published, supporting papers are distributed in advance of meetings and minutes kept. Course Committees usually meet three times a year. A description of the way in which the course committee system operates must be included in the Student Handbook.

Consider:

* local requirements and variation (e.g. distance learning course)
* chair
* reporting

1. **The student (course or year rep) system**

Students Representatives selected or elected by the student body will represent their cohort in course committee meetings. The responsibility for ensuring that students are able to participate effectively in course committee meetings rests with XXX.

Induction and training will be offered to Student Representatives to prepare them for their roles (in terms of canvassing the views of other students; their role in course committee meetings; and reporting back to their peers). Year representatives can be provided with an overview of current issues, including issues related to the SGUL validation arrangement, by XXX as part of their training.

Consider:

* access to SGUL Students’ Union training if off site
* integration and support from SGUL Students’ Union

1. **Student evaluation of modules and programmes**

Consider:

* procedures to gather feedback from students on their experience as learners
* procedures for responding to feedback from students in a timely and considered manner.

1. **Institutional Surveys**

Consider:

* inclusion of students in the SGUL student experience survey or XXX internal surveys
* inclusion in NSS / PRES / PTES in the UK

1. **Student representation – other**

Consider:

* formal members of the SGUL Students’ Union / associate categories?
* access to facilities of SU
* access to SU officers

1. **Annual Monitoring**

SGUL’s annual programme monitoring procedures are documented in the Quality Manual. The standard annual monitoring procedure involves the completion of an Annual Programme Monitoring form, APMR. XXX is responsible for completing the APMR form and, following consideration at the course committee, submitting the form to SGUL for consideration at SGUL’s XXX committee. The ALT will advise on any aspect of the process.

1. **Graduation ceremonies, certificates and transcripts**

Consider:

* which graduation ceremony
* provision of successful completers list and details
* certificate design (joint award)
* transcript design
* production and distribution of award certificates
* production and distribution of transcripts and ongoing management of replacement certificate and transcript requests

1. **Modifications**

Consider:

* initiation process for programme changes
* routes for approval in addition to those required in the Quality Manual

1. **Placement Learning**

Consider:

* management of placement or study outside the main institutions
* costs and support resources
* institutional liaison and legal implications

1. **Staff development**

Consider:

* sharing costs of staff development
* access to each institution’s development, formal and informal

*Based on a document provided by Kingston University, adapted by Derek Baldwinson for a specific agreement and then turned into a template by SB 12 July 2015, then amended*