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## Collaborations and External Appointments Policy

### 1. Policy Overview

This policy outlines the policy on the identification and management of potential collaborators and the appointment of external members at UniHaven College.

### 2. Policy Statement

Consistent with national policy in Ireland, the College's Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in International Foundation Studies award for its UniHaven Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in International Foundation Studies Programme ("the programme") that is made on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) is intended to promote mutual recognition and confidence in the learning outcomes attained by its students. Collaboration arrangements are organised with reputable individuals and/or bodies and are subject to the College's quality assurance procedures in line with the following QQI requirements:

- *"The quality assurance procedures include explicit criteria and procedures for the recruitment and engagement of external, independent, national and international experts (where appropriate), including the selection and recruitment of expert panel members. Ethical guidelines relating to the selection and participation of such external experts are provided to the experts. These require a declaration by the external expert of any interests that could conflict, or might appear to conflict, with the role or responsibilities proposed by the provider. Independence and expertise are reviewed each time a person is engaged because both are subject to change. The names and affiliations of expert panellists, examiners and authenticators and other external experts associated with the provider are collated and monitored by the provider" <sup>1</sup>.*

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<sup>1</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers (2016), section 10.3



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- Legal, reputation and compliance requirements<sup>2</sup>
    - Is the provider a legal entity, with education and training as a principal function?
    - Is the legal entity a identified legal person, having rights and responsibilities under the law?
    - Has the provider specified its dependencies, collaborations, obligations, parent organisations, and subsidiaries?
    - Has the provider declared any third-party relationships and partnerships?
    - Does the provider comply with applicable regulations and legislation in all jurisdictions in which it operates?
    - Is the provider in good standing in the qualifications systems and education and training systems in any jurisdictions in which it operates (or in which its parents or subsidiaries operate) or enrolls learners, or in which it has arrangements with awarding bodies, quality assurance agencies, qualifications authorities, ministries of education and training, professional bodies, and regulators?
  - Resource, governance, and structural requirements<sup>3</sup>
    - Is the provider stable and in good financial standing?
    - Does the provider have a reasonable business case for sustainable provision?
    - Does the provider have fit-for-purpose governance, management and decision-making structures?
    - Does the provider have arrangements for providing required information to the voluntary provider?
    - Does the provider have the capacity to deliver education and training as demonstrated through experience and a track record in providing education and training programmes?

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<sup>2</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Independent/Private Providers coming to QQI on a Voluntary Basis (2016), section 9

<sup>3</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Independent/Private Providers coming to QQI on a Voluntary Basis (2016), section 9



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- Does the provider have sufficient resources, as well as corporate, structural and internal quality assurance systems in place, to sustainably provide education and training programmes?
  - Programme development and provision requirements<sup>4</sup>
    - Does the provider have a fit-for-purpose and stable complement of education and training staff?
    - Does the provider have fit-for-purpose premises, facilities, and resources?
    - Does the provider have structures and resources to underpin the fair and consistent assessment of learner achievement?
    - Does the provider have arrangements for the protection of enrolled learners?

The College does not currently engage any other provider as a collaborative provider for the running of the programme in Ireland nor does it intend to run the QQI programme online or overseas. Should it do so, the above requirements will be met. External collaborations are, therefore, limited to the Higher Education Institution (HEI) partners who accept students who successfully complete their studies with the College, external council/board/committee members, and overseas recruitment agents who help to recruit international students for study in Ireland. All such collaborations are subject to the quality assurance guidelines outlined in this policy and are referred to as external collaborations/collaborators as opposed to collaborative provisions.

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

The CEO has ultimate responsibility for all external collaborations with delegated authority afforded to the Chief Revenue Officer for recruitment agents and commercial partners and the Academic Director (AD) for academic collaborators.

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<sup>4</sup> Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Independent/Private Providers coming to QQI on a Voluntary Basis (2016), section 9



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#### 4. Policy

The College is acutely aware of its responsibility for promoting, developing, and maintaining the academic reputation and high standing of Irish higher education and awards. In fulfilling this responsibility, it will apply, as a minimum, the same quality assurance standards to its work with its education collaborators as it does to the quality assurance of its internal academic provisions. The College's general guidelines for working with external collaborators include the following:

- The establishment and approval of external collaborators are subject to appropriate academic, legal, and financial due diligence, and risk assessment as appropriate in the context of the nature of the collaboration.
- External collaborator relationships should be established and conducted in a spirit of collective ownership, mutual respect, trust, openness, and transparency.
- Overseas collaborations should accommodate cultural and local differences having due regard for ethical considerations, including respecting the rights of students, staff, and partners.
- Collaborative relationships should incorporate flexibility and allow for continuous dialogue and interaction among the partners, to facilitate evolution and development in response to challenges posed by a dynamic national and international higher education environment.
- A formal written agreement is required.
- The College expects that all external collaborators will affirm their individual and collective responsibility to uphold College academic standards and quality assurance.

#### **HEI Partners**

Students who successfully complete the programme and who meet HEI entry and visa requirements will progress to HEI partner institutions. The College will perform its due diligence on its academic, legal, and financial standing to ensure that it is satisfied that the HEI partner does not present an undue risk to the College. The risks and opportunities relevant to



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working in collaboration with such HEI partners will be assessed and decided on at Executive Management Team (EMT) meetings in the context of the College's strategic priorities as would any significant new business proposal on the proposal from AC in an academic context and the Chief Revenue Officer in a commercial context. Such risk will be scrutinised using UPOL003 UniHaven Risk Management Policy Rev 1.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and, if an MoU is not needed, a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) or Agency Agreement will be necessary to outline the duties, responsibilities, and non-responsibilities of each party in written agreement form and to confirm commercial arrangements. Such agreements must be signed by both parties before any formal programme or pathway advertisement, student recruitment, or programme delivery covered by such collaborations shall begin.

HEI partner arrangements are reviewed annually through the HEI Partner Review Committees, one for each respective HEI partner. Details of this committee are set out below.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the HEI Partner Review Committee is to review student progression to the respective HEI partners, to review the College-HEI Partner academic standards and progression, and to review lessons learned generally with a view to enhancing the partnership on an annual basis. This review will feed into the College's annual self-monitoring and review processes with its findings included in the Annual Quality Report to QQI.

### **Key Responsibilities**

This committee will conduct annual reviews with HEI partners under this formalised structure and associated roles. Its key responsibilities include:



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- Student Progression Reviews.
    - Reviews the quantity of students who have successfully progressed from the College to the HEI partner and from year 1 of the HEI partner degree to subsequent years to include the number of conditional offers issued to UniHaven students.
    - Reviews and considers HEI feedback about the quality of students who have successfully progressed.
    - Reviews the pastoral or other needs of any students who are progressing subject to students' permission.
    - Reviews any student-related feedback.
  - Academic Reviews
    - Reviews respective institution programme entry criteria to ensure they are aligned and, where necessary, updates the respective QA documentation to reflect any changes that may be needed.
    - To ensure that academic standards have been maintained as planned.
    - Reviews any other relevant academic feedback.
  - Partnership Enhancement
    - Discusses ways to further enhance the relationship between the College and the HEI partners to provide the best opportunities and outcomes to students.

## **Membership**

Its membership will include:

- Academic Director (Chair).
- Programme Manager.
- CEO.
- Other College members as relevant.
- A College graduate attending the HEI partner.
- HEI Partner senior representative (normally the International Officer/Manager).  
Additional HEI Partner representatives may attend as necessary.



### **Frequency of meetings**

Annually.

### **Receives reports/information from**

- Programme Manager for student admissions, academic performance and HEI partner progression data.
- HEI partner representative for HEI partner data, feedback, and insights.

### **Reports to**

- AC for academic reports and recommendations.
- EMT regarding any resource requirements, where relevant.



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## External Council/Board/Committee Members

- The following guidelines should apply to the selection and appointment of external members to all College boards, AC, and committees. Any staff member can complete the External Examiner/Member Nomination Form (see Appendix) by stating how a nominee meets the selection criteria below. External members of any board must have
  - Academic qualifications and/or professional expertise appropriate to the role they will fill.
  - At least 5 years of relevant industrial, commercial, or academic experience depending on the expertise needed.
  - At least 10 years of academic experience is needed for the Independent Chair of AC role. See UniHaven Quality Assurance Manual Rev 2, chapter 2 for the full requirements for the Independent Chair of AC role.
  - A willingness to devote time to their role.
  - A willingness to arbitrate on or adjudicate on problem cases.
  - A willingness to respond quickly to requests for information.

A period of appointment of not more than three years is envisaged for external appointments. The reappointment of external appointees who have completed a three-year term will be considered by the College in exceptional cases only. If an external appointee must withdraw their services during the three years of appointment due to professional or personal reasons, we will identify and appoint a suitable replacement promptly. A completed and signed UFORM021 UniHaven External Examiner/Member Nomination Form Rev 1 and External Examiner/Member Declaration (for nominees) and Agreement Rev 1 must be provided. Nominee credentials are then assessed at AC. All appointments are approved by the Academic Director under the auspices of AC before taking up the respective roles.



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## **Recruitment Agents**

The securing of agreed services from overseas recruitment agents is the responsibility of the Chief Revenue Officer. In all cases, a background check of such agents is necessary, and a written agency agreement must be signed by the College and the respective recruitment agent outlining areas such as commercial terms, confidentiality and mutual responsibilities before any recruitment activity begins. See UPOL027 UniHaven Agent Policy Rev 1 for full guidelines on the selection, management, and review of recruitment agents.

## **Annual Monitoring and Review**

Annual monitoring and review of all collaborative arrangements will be undertaken as part of the annual review cycle. HEI partner reviews will take place via the respective HEI Partner Review Committees. All review findings will feed into the Annual Quality Report for QQI.

### 5. Procedures and Forms

This procedure addresses the processes involved in inducting external individuals to the roles of members/chairs of any College board or committee. UFORM021 UniHaven External Examiner/Member Nomination Form Rev 1 and the External Examiner/Member Agreement Rev 1 should be used in conjunction with this procedure, and both are attached in the Appendix.

On approval of an External Member and prior to induction the following material will be supplied:

- The mission of the College and its context.
- The overall structure of the programme.
- Programme Title.
- Invitation to Induction.



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- A signed duplicate copy of the External Examiner/Member Agreement.
  - Name and contact details of all relevant College staff.
  - Dates of the relevant Board, Committee, and Council meetings that the member will partake in.



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**APPENDIX**

**UFORM021 UniHaven External Examiner/Member Nomination Form Rev 1**

Name of Nominee:	
Academic Qualifications:	
Professional expertise:	
Areas of specialisation:	



Place of work / Address:	
Telephone:	
Email:	
Summary of relevant experience:	
Academic Year and Programme(s), subject(s) to be examined:	
Other information:	
Has the nominee agreed to act as proposed?	Yes___ No___
Proposal made by:	Name:
	Title:
Signed:	Date:
Academic Director Approval of Nominee on Behalf of UniHaven AC for a period of 3 years, subject to written agreement including conflict of interest statement/signature.	Name:
Signed:	Date:



## External Examiner/Member Declaration and Agreement

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (PRINT NAME), agree to be bound by UniHaven College’s (“the College”) agreement terms as outlined below.

Start Date of Agreement: \_\_\_\_\_

I declare that

- I have expertise and experience in relevance to the role I will now hold with the College and as provided to the College as part of my nomination process.
- I comply with all relevant requirements laid down by the relevant statutory bodies.
- I am not engaged in any reciprocal external relationship between the College and my department or institution.
- I have not had close involvement with the College during the last three years as, for example, a member of staff, a member of AC or as a student.
- I have no conflict of interest in taking up this role or, where there is a potential for conflict of interest, I have declared as much.
- I am aware that my term of appointment will be a maximum of three years starting on the start date listed in this agreement and that my re-appointment would be considered by the College in exceptional cases only.
- If I must withdraw my services during the three years of appointment due to professional or personal reasons, I accept that the College will identify and appoint a suitable replacement in a timely manner.
- As relevant to External Examiners, I do not hold more than two concurrent substantive external examinership, including the one at the College, nor will I do so without the prior agreement of the College.
- As relevant to External Examiners, I agree to be bound by UPOL016 UniHaven External Examining Policy including the potential early termination of this agreement should I be found guilty of misconduct.

### Signatures

\_\_\_\_\_ Date  
**External Member**

\_\_\_\_\_ Date:  
**Academic Director on behalf of Academic Council**

### **Quality Assurance Manual (QAM) Chapter 11**

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<b>References/ Supporting Documentation</b>	<p><b>UDOC000 UniHaven Quality Assurance Manual Rev 2</b></p> <p><b>Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers (2016)</b></p> <p><b>Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Independent/Private Providers coming to QQI on a Voluntary Basis (2016)</b></p> <p><b>National Framework of Qualifications</b>  <a href="https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-(NFQ).aspx">https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-(NFQ).aspx</a></p> <p><b>Irish Higher Education Quality Network (IHEQN)</b></p> <p><b>Draft Guidelines for Collaborative and Transnational Provision</b></p> <p><b>Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012</b></p> <p><b>UDOC003 UniHaven Agent Handbook Rev 1</b></p> <p><b>UDOC006 UniHaven Supplier Code of Conduct Rev 1</b></p> <p><b>UPOL003 UniHaven Risk Management Policy Rev 1</b></p> <p><b>UPOL005 Programme Development Policy Rev 2</b></p> <p><b>UPOL027 UniHaven QQI Agent Policy Rev 1</b></p> <p><b>UPOL030 UniHaven Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review Policy Rev 1</b></p>