

## **International Memoranda of Understanding and Agreements**

Global engagement is an essential component of the overall mission of the University of Alabama “to advance the intellectual and social condition of the people of the state, the nation and the world through the creation, translation and dissemination of knowledge with an emphasis on quality programs in the areas of teaching, research and service.” International engagement serves to achieve a world-class environment for research, scholarship, education, the arts, service, and leadership. It also advances the University's academic, research, scholarship, and service priorities, consistent with a top tier university, and supports the goals of our 2016 Strategic Plan.

Through international Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and International Agreements (IAs), the University fosters a network of students, alumni, teaching and research colleagues, and community leaders with experiences, links, and commitments to share in the development of activities beneficial to the University, the State of Alabama, and the world.

Capstone International Center (CIC) administers the process for Memoranda of Understanding and International Agreements. CIC maintains all agreements and provides information to interested faculty, departments, and personnel about the agreement approval process. The information below is provided to assist the University of Alabama community in developing, processing, and obtaining approval for Memoranda of Understanding and International Agreements.

### **Standards and Considerations**

There are numerous standards and considerations to think about when deciding whether to formalize an international partnership through a memorandum of understanding and/or an international agreement. Below are a few of the most prominent ones to bear in mind.

The agreement must meet the following standards:

- align with UA's mission and goals;
- include approved standard legal terms and conditions and meet SACS accreditation standards;
- assure an appropriate return on investment if the agreement involves UA financial and/or human resource obligations and commitments;
- provide mutual benefit to UA and to the international partner.

Other considerations which may vary depending on the type of agreement being proposed are:

- Long-term viability;
- Financial commitments;
- Access to financial support;
- Health insurance;
- Admissions procedures;
- Visa requirements;
- Transfer of credit and enrollment processes;
- Faculty and student academic appointments;

- English language proficiency and testing;
- Procedural concerns such as programmatic structure and timing/academic calendars.

### **Types of Agreements**

Below are definitions and descriptions of some of the most common types of international agreements. To simplify and standardize its agreements, CIC has worked with the Office of Counsel of the University of Alabama System to develop templates for certain types of agreements. These were developed for specific activities and obviously do not cover all of the possible options for collaboration. In instances where the partner institution proposes a different agreement or does not agree to the language of the template, CIC will work with you, the partner institution, and the Office of Counsel to negotiate an acceptable agreement. Questions and requests for assistance in preparing agreements should be directed to CIC.

#### Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a **general non-binding statement** of intent to cooperate and explore collaborative activities between UA and a partner university, institution, or organization. An MOU may not contain financial or other binding obligations. An MOU must (1) identify the contracting parties and purpose; (2) be signed by authorized signatories (President and/or Provost of UA and usually corresponding rank at the partner institution). Additional signatories may be added and could include deans, international administrators, etc. The MOU provides a simple format to enter into a general agreement and serves as the foundation for more detailed agreements on specific activities. **An MOU is often the initial agreement to explore the development of more substantive and binding agreements.**

#### Undergraduate Student Exchange (Reciprocal)

This agreement is used to spell out, in detail, the specific areas and terms of reciprocal undergraduate student exchange, including the roles, responsibilities, activities, and contributions of the parties. The purpose of this agreement is to establish the details of a partnership whereby there is an exchange of undergraduate students for the purpose of earning credits towards a degree. The financial and logistical implications must be discussed, decided, and included in the agreement. This is a binding agreement and may be amended only through written consent of the parties. It is vital that the number of students to and from UA remain equal over a pre-determined length of time for budgetary and other considerations.

#### Graduate Student Exchange (Reciprocal)

This agreement is used to spell out, in detail, the specific areas and terms of reciprocal graduate student exchange, including the roles, responsibilities, activities, and contributions of the parties. The purpose of this agreement is to establish the details of a partnership whereby there is an exchange of graduate students for the purpose of earning credits towards a degree. The financial and logistical implications must be discussed, decided, and included in the agreement. This is a binding agreement and may be amended only through written consent of the parties. It is vital that the number of students to and from UA remain equal over a pre-determined length of time for budgetary and other considerations.

### Faculty/Staff/Scholar Exchange

This agreement is used to spell out, in detail, the specific areas and terms of faculty/staff/scholar exchange, including the roles, responsibilities, activities and contributions of the parties. The financial and logistical implications must be discussed, decided and included in the agreement. The agreement will address issues such as the selection process; number of faculty; housing; financial consideration; time period; and program contacts. This is a binding agreement and may be amended only through written consent of the parties.

### Undergraduate/Graduate Education Abroad Agreement

This agreement identifies program details involved in a student education abroad experience. The agreement will address issues such as the selection process, number of students, housing, fees, time period of the program, and program contacts. Education abroad agreements can incorporate third party providers, exchanges that do not require UA/partner equivalencies, or affiliation partnerships.

### International Partnership Agreement (Faculty-led or Group Study Abroad Programs)

This agreement details a specific undergraduate education abroad program led by UA faculty or authorized personnel. The agreement will describe the housing arrangements, fees, time period, course requirements (for credit-bearing programs), contacts, and other information. In many instances, a service contract will be used rather than a partnership agreement.

### X+Y and/or Dual Degree Agreements

An X+Y and/or a Dual Degree Program is an academic program collaboratively offered by UA and a non-U.S. higher education institution that leads to the award of one (or more) degrees issued separately by each of the institutions.

### **Approval Process**

Capstone International Center (CIC) administers the process for all Memoranda of Understanding and International Agreements. CIC maintains all agreements and provides information to interested faculty, departments, and personnel about the agreement approval process. You should involve CIC in the process as early as possible. The following are details regarding the process for developing an international agreement at The University of Alabama and the steps necessary for obtaining approval.

This process applies to all agreements initiated by UA or an international institution. The following steps are necessary to obtain approval:

#### 1. Preliminary Consultation with CIC and Approval from Department/College

The person(s) considering or initiating the creation or renewal of an international agreement should contact and consult with CIC as early in the process as possible. After an initial discussion with CIC, if a decision is made to pursue an agreement, the initiator must meet with the relevant Department Head, School Director, or equivalent, and the College Dean, or equivalent, in order to discuss the proposed memorandum of understanding or international agreement. With support from the above

parties, the person(s) initiating the agreement must complete an International Agreement Information and Support Form.

## 2. Consult with CIC

Upon completion of the International Agreement Information and Support Form, contact Capstone International Center (205.348.5256 or [cic@ua.edu](mailto:cic@ua.edu); Dr. Teresa Wise, Associate Provost, International Education and Global Outreach) to set up an appointment and discuss next steps. Next steps may include items such as: reviewing the Approval Considerations; obtaining additional information from the proposed partner and/or other sources; selecting an appropriate UA template; consulting with other units on campus, etc.

## 3. Negotiating the Agreement

In instances where the partner institution is not willing to use a pre-approved UA template, proposes a different type of agreement, does not agree to the language of one of UA's templates, or wants to make substantial changes to the template, CIC will work with you, the partner institution, and the Office of Counsel to negotiate an acceptable agreement. Questions and requests for assistance in negotiating agreements should be directed to CIC.

## 4. Internal Review and Signatures

Based on the type of agreement, CIC will route the document for internal review to appropriate offices. CIC is responsible for obtaining approval signatures at UA. These must include, but are not limited to, those of the Provost and/or President. (Note that for purchased service agreements such as those for faculty-led study abroad programs, the Associate Vice President for Finance has signatory authority.) Depending on the preference of the initiator, additional signatories may be added and often include deans, international administrators, etc. After obtaining approval signatures at UA, CIC coordinates the transmittal of the approved agreement to the partner institution for signature.

## 5. Records management

Original, signed agreements are returned to the Capstone International Center and retained in a central file. Copies are provided to the initiating department/office and to other UA offices as appropriate.