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SECTION: Academic Affairs
SUBJECT: International Academic Agreements
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Policy for: All Campuses
Procedure for: Columbia and Regional Campuses
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I. Policy

The University of South Carolina collaborates with academic and research institutions in many countries across the world. These collaborations are often accompanied by a formal affiliation agreement that outlines expectations and obligations for each institution. This policy defines the types of possible agreements and establishes the protocol for approval of a new program or review of an existing program.

The Office of International Programs oversees the review and development of University agreements with international institutions for the Columbia and Regional campuses.

A. Types of Agreements

1. **Memorandum of Understanding:** An agreement between the University and another university or organization that establishes an institutional relationship to pursue joint initiatives or general areas of collaboration in research, exchange of information and student/scholar mobility.
2. **Research Affiliation:** An agreement to support research collaboration in a particular area or areas. The agreement will define intellectual rights for all work products resulting from the collaboration as outlined in University Policy ACAF 1.33 Intellectual Property Policy.
3. **Academic Joint and Dual Degree Programs:** An agreement to offer a joint or dual degree with another institution. New and modified academic programs must follow the approval process outlined in this policy as well as the approval process outlined in University Policy ACAF 2.00 Creation, Modification and Termination of Academic Programs.
4. **Other Collaborative Degree Programs:** Programs governed by specific

agreements typically involving an articulated transfer of credit from one institution to another for the award of a single or multiple degrees. May also include bridge programs that involve non-credit study prior to course work for academic credit.

5. Faculty Exchange: An agreement between the University and another institution to allow faculty to exchange for the purpose of teaching or research at the partnering institution.
6. Student Exchange - Undergraduate or Graduate: An agreement between the University and another institution to allow mutually acceptable students from one institution to take classes for credit at the partnering institution. In a reciprocal exchange, students will continue to pay tuition to the home institution in most cases. In other types of affiliations, the student will pay tuition and other fees to the host institution.
7. Contracts with Third-Party Study Abroad Program Providers: An agreement that facilitates the participation of University students on study abroad programs administered by a third party.
8. Contracts with Third-Party Logistics Providers: An agreement or contract with a third party organization to provide travel or other logistical arrangements for University administered programs.

B. Third-Party Service Providers

The University partners with a number of external service providers to assist with planning and execution of international programs. However, the University does not have any exclusive agreements with any provider. For student-oriented programs, faculty and administrators should make every effort to convey appropriate options available to students that meet the required levels of academic rigor and student support.

C. Required Approvals

1. Academic Program Liaisons (APL)

An Academic Program Liaison (APL) will be designated for each college/school on the Columbia campus, for each Senior campus, and for the Regional campuses. The APLs will serve as the main information resource on academic program actions and as the academic program liaison to the Provost's Office for their respective units. The list of current Academic Program Liaisons can be found at www.sc.edu/provost/acadprog.

Draft documents and notifications may be forwarded by the APL, but all formal program actions must be forwarded directly by the dean or chief academic affairs officer.

2. Contractual and bidding procedures as outlined in University Policy BUSF 7.00 Purchasing should be followed when necessary.
3. All contracts and agreements must be reviewed and signed by the Office of the Board of Trustees before the international program commences. No other individuals at the University are approved to sign agreements referencing the University of South Carolina. See also University Policy BTRU 1.04 Authority to Sign Contracts.
4. All new proposed or renewal agreements must be approved by the academic unit head(s), the dean(s), the Office of International Programs, the Provost's Office, and the Office of General Counsel.
5. If the proposed or renewal agreement is related to a new or existing academic program or degree, the academic unit head(s) must also follow the procedures outlined in University Policy ACAF 2.00 Creation and Revision of Academic Programs to ensure compliance with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE) regulations.

D. Approval Criteria

1. Specific criteria are used when reviewing proposed and renewal agreements to assess the connection to the University's academic mission, institutional interest, and potential for success. The criteria include:
 - a. the perceived level of demand for the proposed program or record of demand for an existing program requesting renewal;
 - b. the prospects for substantive collaboration to occur;
 - c. the caliber of the partnering college;
 - d. the compatibility of institutional mission; and
 - e. the existence of agreements with other partnering institutions that may compete with or duplicate proposed agreement.
2. Additional criteria used to review programs involving students include:
 - a. whether the partnering institution (and the University when appropriate) has relevant coursework that the student can take;
 - b. the quality of the language instruction at the partnering institution;

- c. the administrative support and facilities available for students at the partnering institution;
- d. the matchup between the academic calendar of the partnering institution and the University's academic calendar; and
- e. the ability of students from partnering institutions to meet admissions requirements.

E. Risk Management Restrictions

The University reserves the right to deny participation in or put a moratorium on any active program or agreement if it is determined that there is a risk present for any students, faculty or the institution itself.

1. Student Programs

- a. The University will not approve new or renewal agreements for student-oriented programs that involve University student travel to countries on the United States Department of State Travel Warning List.
- b. Students from institutions in those countries may apply to an existing University program here in the United States. Individual University students will only be approved to attend a program in any country on the State Department Travel Warning List after successfully completing the petition process administered by International Programs. The University reserves the right to revoke its approval should the safety or health situation in that country worsen.

F. Existing Program Review, Renewal and Tracking (Columbia and Regional Campuses only)

- 1. Affiliation agreements with other institutions will usually have five year terms unless otherwise stated in the agreement.
- 2. The Office of International Programs will initiate and coordinate a review of the agreement or program activity in the last year of each term, following the same approval steps as if it were a new proposal. If there has been no activity for the previous five years, then the program and agreement will be terminated and a review for renewal is not required.
- 3. Programs established under agreements specifying automatic renewal should be contacted by Office of International Programs at the end of the fourth year, and a review conducted during the fifth year to ensure that the programs are reviewed before the automatic renewal occurs.

4. The Office of International Programs will notify the Provost's Office in writing regarding the outcome of all agreement or program reviews. Additionally, copies of all agreement or program renewals should be forwarded to the Provost's Office.
5. The Office of International Programs is responsible for maintaining the official list of University international agreements and programs on the Columbia and Regional campuses. The Office of the Provost will evaluate all international academic agreements and contracts against the purpose of the institution every five years or when subject to renewal. The evaluation will consider the following factors: consistency with University mission, agreement activity, appropriateness of administration, adequacy of risk and safety management, academic soundness, and ongoing viability.

II. Procedure

A. Procedure for Senior Campuses

Each Senior campus should develop individual campus-based procedures to implement this policy.

B. Procedure for Columbia and Regional Campuses

1. Required Documents and Forms

The following materials should be assembled in preparation for the approval process as outlined below in Section II.B. The final packet received by the Office of General Counsel must include each of the following documents:

- a. A Contract Approval form with signatures at each appropriate level;
- b. Two original copies of draft new or renewal agreement;
- c. A letter of support from dean(s); and
- d. A certification of an official translation if the contracts or agreements are in a language other than English (required).

2. Chain of Approval

- a. Agreements not related to new or existing academic programs or degrees must be reviewed according the chain of approval outlined below.
 - i. At the first stage of development of a new program or affiliation agreement, the academic unit head or campus, college or school dean (hereafter referred to as "dean") should contact the APL for

the college, school or campus. (See section I.C.1. above.) The APL should then contact the Office of International Programs regarding the review process and requirements and to receive preliminary approval to proceed with the proposed program.

- ii. Following a preliminary discussion with the Office of International Programs, a draft or renewal agreement is developed in the department or academic unit.
 - iii. The draft agreement and accompanying forms are forwarded to dean for approval.
 - iv. The dean will forward the approved proposal to the Office of International Programs with a letter of support. The dean's letter of support indicates commitment of the college/school to provide the financial, space or other resources necessary to ensure success of the program.
 - v. After review, the Office of International Programs forwards the proposal to the Provost's Office and the Office of General Counsel for approval. Revisions made as necessary.
 - vi. After Provost Office and General Counsel approval, the agreement and accompanying paperwork is forwarded by the Provost Office to the Office of the Board of Trustees for final review and signature.
 - vii. The Office of the Board of Trustees returns the original signed copy of each agreement to the Office of General Counsel. Copies of the signed agreements will be sent to the Office of International Programs for distribution to the originating academic unit and to partnering institutions.
 - viii. The Office of International Programs will coordinate any remaining signatures required as necessary.
- b. Agreements related to new or existing academic programs or degrees must follow the steps above and must also be submitted through the faculty governance review process as outlined in University Policy ACAF 2.00 Creation and Revision of Academic Programs. In some cases, the proposals will also need CHE and SACS approval prior to implementation.
 - c. Contracts with Third-Party Logistics Providers do not require dean or Provost Office approval if the program itself was approved in an earlier process as outlined above in Section II.B.1. These agreements should be

approved by the academic unit head(s) and the Office of International Programs only and then forwarded on to the Office of General Counsel and the Office of the Board of Trustees for final review and approval.

III. Related Policies

See also:

University Policy ACAF 2.00 Creation and Revision of Academic Programs

University Policy ACAF 1.33 Intellectual Property Policy.

University Policy BTRU 1.04 Authority to Sign Contracts

University Policy BUSF 7.00 Purchasing

IV. Reason for Revisions

Policy updated to specify the requirement for periodic review of contractual agreements and to describe factors to be considered in their evaluation.