

### **Introduction**

International academic agreements formalize collaborative relationships with international institutions and are an important tool in meeting the University's international mission of preparing students for success in a globally integrated world and engaging in research of global importance.

This document describes the most common types of international agreements entered into by the University and when each is appropriate. Note that a single international agreement can contain elements of two or more of these arrangements. For example, a single agreement could include an agreement to exchange a certain number of graduate students and also provide for the exchange of faculty, or a general Memorandum of Understanding could include an agreement to collaborate on specific research project.

### **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**

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.

MOUs provide a general agreement of cooperation and typically specify the scope of possible collaborative activities between the parties without a promise of any particular resources. An MOU should spawn subsequent agreements specifying detailed activities. Additional agreements within the scope of the MOU may be signed as an addendum to the MOU or as a separate stand-alone agreement.

From the University's perspective, there is no need to develop an MOU prior to entering into an international agreement covering a specific activity, such as student exchange or joint faculty research. Because the execution of any international agreement involves significant effort, the University prefers that the number of MOUs generated be held to a minimum. However, at times, an MOU might be required by the foreign institution as a precursor to other activity.

### **Research Affiliation**

An agreement to support research collaboration in a particular area or areas. A research affiliation agreement is needed when University resources are being committed to the research collaboration. A research affiliation agreement should define intellectual property rights for all work products resulting from the collaboration as outlined in University Policy ACAF 1.33 Intellectual Property Policy. A research affiliation agreement also is needed if the research collaboration involves student mobility in either direction.

From the University's perspective, there is no need to develop a research affiliation agreement if there is no commitment of University resources to the research collaboration and no

commitment of student mobility. However, even in those cases a research affiliation agreement might be needed if required by the foreign institution or to be able to able for research grant funding.

### **Academic Joint and Dual Degree Programs**

An agreement to offer a joint or dual degree with another institution. New and modified academic programs offered in conjunction with an international institution must follow the approval process outlined in University Policy ACAF 2.06 International Academic Agreements as well as the approval process outlined in University Policy ACAF 2.00 Creation and Revision of Academic Programs. ACAF 2.00 requires, for example, that a new dual degree program at the graduate level be approved by the Graduate Council and at the undergraduate level by the Faculty Senate.

**Joint Degree Program:** an arrangement in which one diploma is issued representing both institutions. The academic program is offered *jointly* by both institutions. Depending on the program, notification and/or approval is required from CHE and/or SACS. The University does not currently offer any joint degree programs with international partners.

**Dual Degree Program:** an agreement in which the two institutions involved each awards its separate degree to the student. Essentially, the student works to complete coursework at both institutions, and through a series of approved credit transfers, fulfills the requirements of each institution's degree.

### **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.

An articulated transfer of credit agreement can result in what is referred to as a "plus" program, in which a student completes some coursework at one institution (typically either one or two years' worth of credit), then transfers that credit to the second institution. The second institution has previously established course equivalencies for this coursework, and accepts the associated credit. The student completes the remainder of his/her coursework at the second institution, thereby earning his/her degree from the second institution. "Plus" programs may also be referred to as "1+3" or "2+2" programs.

### **Student Exchange**

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

**Office of International Programs**  
**Types of International Academic Agreements**

8/15/12

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.

Reciprocal student exchange agreements provide for the exchange of enrolled students on a one-for-one basis by level (undergraduate or graduate) typically for one or two semesters. The outgoing USC student pays tuition to USC that is then awarded to the incoming international student. The USC student enrolls at the partner institution without paying additional tuition there. Reciprocal exchange agreements must have balance in numbers to be sustainable. Because the USC tuition rate for graduate courses is higher than for undergraduate courses, it is not possible to exchange a USC undergraduate student for an international graduate student on a one-for-one basis.

Reciprocal student exchange agreements must be developed in close collaboration with and are monitored for risk and sustainability by the Study Abroad Office.

**Faculty Exchange**

An agreement between the University and another institution to exchange faculty for the purpose of teaching or research at the partner institution.

From the University's perspective, there is no need to develop a faculty exchange agreement if there is no commitment of University resources. However, an agreement is useful in establishing a formal relationship with the partner institution and can assist in the sustainability of the exchange over time.