

Lehigh University

International Partnership Guidelines

These guidelines have been developed in order to support Lehigh University's colleges, departments, and programs that seek to establish meaningful institution-to-institution relationships for the benefit of LU students, faculty, and staff. Because institution-to-institution agreements may be binding, legal contracts, it is very important that each new formal agreement is entered into with the utmost seriousness and care.

Principle Types of International Agreements:

1. GENERAL MEMO OF UNDERSTANDING AGREEMENT (MOU) - This agreement states the intention of the institutions to explore the potential for collaborative activities in different academic or research areas. It does not include specific activities and must be implemented through addenda or separate specific agreements that are required to be approved by the authorized officials. A General MOU is used to establish the relationship when both institutions believe a formal statement of interest would be an appropriate step. This agreement establishes a substantial framework for exploring collaboration when it seems clear there may be multiple possibilities for collaboration. It identifies and informs both parties about institutional concerns such as restrictions on immigration, technology transfers, and intellectual property.

2. AGREEMENT FOR RECIPROCAL STUDENT EXCHANGES (RSE)/ BILATERAL AGREEMENT-This agreement provides for the equal exchange of students between Lehigh University and an institution abroad. RSE participants are registered at their home institution, so there are no costs associated with tuition. However, RSE activities may have financial, accreditation and immigration implications requiring a thorough evaluation.

3. SHORT-TERM EDUCATION ABROAD AGREEMENT-This agreement details the activities associated with semester-abroad, short-term faculty-led, and internships. It includes the specific conditions and expectations from both parties associated with the implementation of the program. Education abroad programs must be approved by the academic departments and follow the policies and procedures established by the Office of International Affairs.

4. AGREEMENT FOR RESEARCH, TECHNICAL OR SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION-This document structures the commitments, roles and responsibilities, as well as procedures to implement an exchange of faculty, researchers or administrators between LU and an overseas institution. The financial and logistical implications of the exchange must be discussed and agreed upon before the final agreement is submitted for signature. This document will be reviewed by the Office of General Counsel.

5. GRADUATE STUDIES AGREEMENTS-All agreements involving graduate students or related programs must be developed in coordination with and approved by the specific College the student is enrolled in.

6. DUAL DEGREE AGREEMENTS-This document structures the program through which students receive two existing degrees, one from each partner institution. Each institution is primarily responsible for its own degree; however, an articulation of courses as well as the procedures to ensure program quality and coordination is required. This agreement allows for the transfer of credit according to existing undergraduate and graduate policies.

Important Agreement Considerations:

In initiating any new international agreement, Lehigh University faculty and administrators should consider the following factors. As a general rule, if any of the following is lacking, an agreement or MOU should not be signed.

1. Some previous faculty or staff interaction between the proposed partner institutions
2. Strong potential for mutual benefit
3. Compliance with applicable legal restrictions and university regulations
4. Secured financial and infrastructure support (as necessary)
5. Identified on-site coordinators or contact persons at each institution
6. Stated support from all colleges, departments, and programs explicitly named in the agreement
7. A plan for regular program evaluation and renewal

Approval Process:

Lehigh faculty and staff interested in proposing an international partnership should follow this process.

1. To initiate a partnership, Lehigh University units, individual faculty or staff should complete [the New Partnership form](#) in the Global Engagement Directory.
2. The Director of Global Partnerships and Strategic Initiatives will gather information and discuss with appropriate units the viability of the partnership and will then draft the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) or other international agreement based on this proposal.
3. Agreements will be reviewed by the Faculty Committee on Global Affairs. The purpose of this step is to ensure that all the key questions have been answered, to check for duplication and to identify opportunities for collaboration and network building.
4. Depending on the type of agreement, Institutional Research, Study Abroad, the relevant dean(s), department head, and others impacted will review the document and provide feedback.
5. The document will be submitted to General Counsel for legal review.

6. The Vice President/Vice Provost for International Affairs, in consultation with the relevant deans or departments, will make the final decision regarding the international agreement.
7. The director will make sure the document is signed and sent to the appropriate parties.
8. All related activity will be documented in the Global Engagement Directory and assessed on an annual basis.

Every agreement should have at least one designated Lehigh University contact. The designated contact(s) will be required to submit a brief annual report to the Vice President/Vice Provost for International Affairs summarizing activities completed under the terms of the international agreement.

Questions to Consider in Developing a Memorandum of Understanding or Specific Agreement:

- Academic rigor of the proposed institution
 - Are academic standards comparable with Lehigh?
 - Do faculty and programs enjoy a well-known reputation for excellence?
 - Does the partnership have the potential to advance Lehigh's research endeavors?
 - What is the institution's strategic plan? How does it fit with Lehigh's?
 - Is the partner's mission compatible with LU?
- Existing successful programs
 - Does Lehigh already have programs and initiatives in place that would benefit from partnership with those at the proposed university?
 - Is there a faculty connection already established with the proposed partner?
 - What are initial projects that require an MOU/agreement and will launch the partnership?
- Partnership sustainability
 - Is there a significant student/staff/faculty interest in engagement with this institution?
 - Is this partnership viable in light of the current political climate/world events?
 - Do both academic calendars allow for traditional and non-traditional interaction/mobility between faculty and students?
 - What are the anticipated outcomes of a partnership? How will its effectiveness be measured?
 - What are the first activities for this partnership that build understanding at lower cost and risk?
- Overlap with existing partnerships:
 - Does the proposed partnership compete with similar partnerships for students and faculty?
 - Does the proposed partnership address a gap in existing partnerships?

- How does the proposed partnership leverage existing partnerships or institutional strengths?
 - Partner institutional capacity:
 - Does the partner's curriculum match LU's needs?
 - Is the partner's academic calendar compatible with LU? If not, is the proposed partner willing to work with Lehigh on an individual basis?
 - What is the language of instruction? Is there language support?
 - Does the partner have an established administrative office to facilitate the agreement?
 - Are there significant safety concerns?
 - Is the planned activity legal for both partners to undertake?
 - Resources:
 - Will the department, college, or other participating party commit resources to the agreement?
 - What resources is the partner offering?
 - What external sources of support are available?
 - What are the cost advantages of developing this partnership?
 - Which of the following are available for support of this partnership: Faculty release time; travel for site visits; accommodations for visiting scholars; aid for study abroad students; special projects or collaborations?
 - Outcomes and expected level of activity:
 - What are the first activities for this partnership that build understanding at lower cost and risk?
 - What is a reasonable level of activity for this fully developed partnership?
- Does the relationship demonstrate potential for multiple interdisciplinary activities in the future, particularly engaging more than one Lehigh unit or department?
 - Institutional monitoring:
 - Who is the LU faculty member willing to sponsor the partnership agreement?
 - What is the term for review of the agreement?
 - What are the activity-based metrics that will be used to evaluate this partnership?