Initiating an International Partnership Agreement

So, you have an idea for an international collaboration or partnership. How do you move it forward? You’ll need to pitch the idea to a sponsoring department and the OGE, develop a plan for establishing the partnership, and work through the process of internal review and approvals.

**The Pitch**

- Discuss the idea with your department/unit to determine whether/how it meets strategic goals/objectives of the unit, college, and/or university and to ascertain the level of interest.

- Discuss the idea and strategic objectives with the OGE to assess viability, learn about the necessary processes, and determine whether the idea duplicates existing initiatives. The OGE will also explain the various types of agreements and program models generally used for international partnerships.

**Estimated time: 30 min—2 months depending on complexity**

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**The Plan**

Once consent to proceed is obtained from the department, college and OGE (and in some cases the Provost), you should work with the Vice Provost or Director of International Partnerships to develop a plan for establishing the relationship. The conversation should determine:

- Type of Agreement Required. Does the intended activity require MOU and Activity Agreement or only one of these? If Activity Agreement is required, what type?

- Departmental/College Liaison. Who from the initiating unit will be championing and shepherding the process, having conversations with the partner, and collaborating with OGE during the review and approvals?

**Estimated time: 1-2 conversations with OGE**

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➢ OGE Liaison. Which member of OGE will be working with the department/college on this agreement? This will depend on the type of activity planned.

➢ Delegation of responsibilities among the liaisons.

➢ Establish realistic timeline for the collection of necessary information, negotiation with partners and review process.

➢ Discuss Travel schedules. If travel is required for the negotiation/planning of the initiative, timelines, budgets and personnel designated to travel should be discussed early.

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**The Process**

Estimated time: 1-3 months for an MOU; 2-12 months for an activity agreement. Project complexity and partner’s review processes often extend the time to completion.

The establishment of an international agreement can be as simple as obtaining approval and signatures on our general MOU template or as complicated as developing an articulation agreement for a feeder institution or 2+2 program, or negotiating terms of balance on an exchange. While the process can be slow, rarely does it require considerable time from any one person. The pace is determined by the number of steps for review and approval at EACH institution and the challenges of working with different academic calendars, work weeks and time zones. Despite the pace, the process rarely breaks down. We repeatedly see both patience and flexibility reap reward. So, please plan the launch date at least 12–18 months out.

The process may include:

➢ Establishing a general Memorandum of Understanding with the partner. Complete the approval form and email it along with the MOU as an attachment to the OGE liaison for this project. OGE will obtain signatures from the Provost.

*Note: If the partner requests changes to the MOU language, additional review and approval will be required at CU prior to obtaining Provost’s signature.*

➢ Determining the type of activity agreement needed. Some of the more common activity agreements include Student Exchanges, Hosting Internships, Faculty Exchange, Articulation Agreements (2+2 and feeder institutions) and agreement to host study abroad programs.

➢ Negotiating details of activity agreement with partner institution.
Navigating the review process. General MOUs and student exchanges are relatively straightforward, however, more complex activities may require review by other offices such as, import/export control, General Counsel, Graduate School, Curricular units, Risk Management, procurement, Student Financial Services and Board of Trustees. OGE liaison will ascertain appropriate level of approvals required.

Obtaining signatures. OGE will obtain Provost’s signature and coordinate partner signatures with the Department Liaison.

Recording and Reporting completed agreement. OGE will add agreement to database and alert Vice Provost for Academic Affairs for SACS and CHE notification.