



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Operating Policy and Procedure

**OP 34.28: International Partnership Agreements for Students, Faculty, and Researchers**

**DATE:** January 19, 2024

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to establish procedures for creating international partnership agreements with international institutions in a way that:

1. Follows immigration regulations as promulgated by the U.S. Government.
2. Conforms with standards of safety and responsibility in study abroad as required by federal and state regulations such as those promulgated by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board; other applicable regulations of the Texas Administrative Code, as well as Texas Tech University (TTU) operating policies and procedures; and guidelines recognized by professional organizations such as NAFSA: Association of International Educators and the Forum on Education Abroad.
3. Complies with all relevant accreditation standards.
4. Complies with all operational and program standards as set forth in [OP 34.20, Study Abroad Programs](#).

**REVIEW:** This OP will be reviewed in August of each year. The Vice Provost for International Affairs (VPIA) will coordinate substantive revisions with all other principals as well as the International Affairs Council and will forward such revisions to the Provost and Senior Vice President (PSVP) for approval.

**POLICY/PROCEDURE**

This OP outlines procedures for establishing academic partnerships with international institutions that typically consist of two steps: (1) an initial Letter of Intent (LoI) to demonstrate the institutions' interest to collaborate, and (2) a subsequent binding agreement describing the requirements and obligations, if any, of such collaboration.

**1. International Partnership Agreements**

- a. TTU has charged the Office of the Provost, International Affairs (International Affairs) with the responsibility to coordinate, facilitate, maintain, and advocate for initiatives to create international partnerships to foster the university's strategic priorities. International partnerships must be processed by TTU International Affairs to be considered valid.
- b. In support of TTU's strategic plan, International Affairs seeks to establish partnerships with the highest caliber international institutions. The Associate Director of International Grants

Administration and Partnerships (ADIGAP) will work with faculty and administrators to create a workable agreement and will oversee the approval and signature processes. The ADIGAP is able to offer guidance for the establishment of any new departmental, college, or university-wide agreements between TTU and international institutions or organizations. The first step in initiating any new partnership will be for the initiating department to complete the Partnership Proposal Web Form and return it to the ADIGAP.

- c. While international partnership agreements may exist in multiple languages, the English language version should be executed by TTU authorized staff and will be considered the official version in case of any dispute. The Assistant Vice Provost for International Affairs (AVPIA) must review all international agreements. All agreements will use the preapproved templates whenever possible. After review by the AVPIA, international partnership agreements will be forwarded to Procurement Services for additional legal and contractual reviews. Procurement Services will forward to the Office of General Counsel for their review. International Affairs can accept physical or electronic/digital fully executed agreements as official in accordance with TTU policies.

## 2. Types

### a. Letter of Intent (LoI) – formerly Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

- (1) An LoI is not a legally binding document or contract, but rather a symbolic or courtesy compact declaring the parties' interest in pursuing further collaboration. Any further collaborations must be evidenced by an international partnership agreement.
- (2) Signature authority
  - (a) University-wide LoIs must be signed by the VPIA or the AVPIA and the international partner equivalent.
  - (b) College-to-college LoIs must be signed by the college dean, the VPIA or the AVPIA, and the international partner equivalent.
  - (c) Department-to-department LoIs must be signed by the department chair, the college dean, the VPIA or the AVPIA, and the international partner equivalent.

### b. Study Abroad (SAB) Agreements

- (1) An SAB agreement allows TTU students to enroll at an international partner institution for up to an academic year. In an SAB 1-Way agreement, students pay tuition and fees directly to the program provider or host university. In an SAB 2-Way agreement, students pay TTU tuition and fees. Students remain enrolled at TTU while participating in an academic program at the international institution. SAB agreements can take a variety of forms but all fall under this umbrella type. More specific details can be found at <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/international/intlrsch/partnerships/agrType.php>.
- (2) An SAB 2-Way program requires that TTU and the international institution balance the value provided by each institution to the other at least over a three-year period. Individual agreements will establish the values indicated for that agreement.
- (3) The Director of Study Abroad must review all SAB Agreements. The Director of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) must review all SAB Agreements that result in TTU receiving international students.

- (4) Signature authority
  - (a) University-wide SAB agreements must be signed by the VPIA or the AVPIA, the PSVP, and the international partner equivalents.
  - (b) College-to-college SAB agreements must be signed by the college dean, the VPIA or the AVPIA, the PSVP, and the international partner equivalents.
  - (c) Department-to-department SAB agreements must be signed by the department chair, the college dean, the VPIA or the AVPIA, the PSVP, and the international partner equivalents.
  - (d) All SAB agreements must also be reviewed and signed by the TTU Chief Procurement Officer (CPO) and also require review by the Office of General Counsel (OGC). Note: Signatures should not be obtained until Procurement Services and OGC have reviewed for legal and business purposes.
- c. Collaborative Agreements
  - (1) Similar to Study Abroad Agreements, the Collaborative Agreements umbrella contains several different sub-types, each with a specific purpose. It is important to note that faculty often do not need a signed agreement to collaborate with an international partner or institution. Collaborative Agreements should be used more for large multidisciplinary team efforts or those involving degree programs. Specific details of different Collaborative Agreements can be found at <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/international/intlrsch/partnerships/agrType.php>.
    - (a) Note: Collaborative degree programs/agreements must meet the requirements set by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), which can be found at the SACSCOC website ([www.sacscoc.org](http://www.sacscoc.org)). To ensure compliance, collaborative degree programs/agreements design **must** be coordinated through International Affairs and the TTU SACSCOC liaison.
  - (2) The AVPIA must review all Collaborative Agreements. The Director of ISSS must review all Collaborative Agreements that result in TTU receiving international students.
  - (3) Signature authority
    - (a) University-wide Collaborative Agreements must be signed by the VPIA or the AVPIA, the PSVP, and the international partner equivalents.
    - (b) College-to-college Collaborative Agreements must be signed by the college dean, the VPIA or the AVPIA, the PSVP, and the international partner equivalents.
    - (c) Department-to-department Collaborative Agreements must be signed by the department chair, the college dean, the VPIA or the AVPIA, the PSVP, and the international partner equivalents.
    - (d) All Collaborative Agreements must also be reviewed and signed by the TTU CPO and also require review by the OGC. Note: Signatures should not be obtained until Procurement Services and OGC have reviewed for legal and business purposes.
- d. Comprehensive Partnership Agreements
  - (1) Comprehensive Partnership Agreements are to be used for TTU relationships with international institutions that fall outside the categories described above, or for

relationships that include combinations of characteristics of the above types of agreements.

- (a) Note: Establishing a Comprehensive Partnership Agreement requires close collaboration among the initiating office, International Affairs, the Graduate School, the SACSCOC Liaison, and the Office for the Vice President for Research & Innovation (OVPR&I), depending on the nature of the partnership.

(2) Signature authority

- (a) University-wide Comprehensive Partnership Agreements must be signed by the VPIA or the AVPIA, the PSVP, and the international partner equivalents.
- (b) College-to-college Comprehensive Partnership Agreements must be signed by the college dean, the VPIA or the AVPIA, the PSVP, and the international partner equivalents.
- (c) Department-to-department Comprehensive Partnership Agreements must be signed by the department chair, the college dean, the VPIA or the AVPIA, the PSVP, and the international partner equivalents.
- (d) All Comprehensive Partnership Agreements must also be reviewed and signed by the TTU CPO and also require review by the OGC. Note: Signatures should not be obtained until Procurement Services and OGC have reviewed for legal and business purposes.

### 3. Collaborating Departments

- a. International Affairs will consult the President's Office and Procurement Services on any agreement or partnership that financially obligates the university.
- b. This OP is designed to govern international academic and study abroad partnership agreements between two or more institutions or departments. International Affairs will route any agreements that contain an international research focus (i.e., the primary purpose is research) through the OVPR&I for review and coordinate with the Vice President for Research & Innovation (or designee) to assure that such agreements comply with the contracting policies of all relevant TTU offices. International Affairs will route any international agreements for business purposes to the Office of Procurement Services.
- c. International Affairs will route any agreements involving graduate students or which contain a graduate focus or component through the Graduate School for review and signature by the Vice Provost for Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs and Dean of the Graduate School (or designee) to assure that such agreements comply with the contracting policies of all relevant TTU offices.
- d. International Affairs will coordinate with Transfer Advising for any agreements involving international students and domestic higher education institutions.

### 4. Duration

In accordance with *Regents' Rules* 07.12.3(d), an agreement (including all options to renew) may not exceed four years unless the contract contains a provision allowing TTU to terminate the agreement without cause with notice of 120 days or less or the agreement has been approved by the Board of Regents.

## **5. Office of General Counsel Review**

In accordance with TTU [System Regulation 07.03](#), any contract with businesses or entities in foreign countries; any contract for events, activities, or travel involving students; and any contract involving the sharing, transfer, or processing of sensitive data, including student records, requires review by the Office of General Counsel.

## **6. Renewals of Agreements**

The VPIA or the AVPIA will approve renewals of existing agreements outlined in this OP that do not modify the original provisions after obtaining written notification from the originating department/college that they wish to continue the agreement in force. International Affairs will process these renewals through Procurement Services. When an agreement requires significant changes to the original provisions, it will require signatures as if it were a new agreement. Under normal circumstances, TTU will not renew LoIs.

## **7. Archiving**

Signed digital copies of all agreements outlined in this OP will be archived in the Office of Procurement Services. Scanned copies of agreements will be held in International Affairs and listed on the International Affairs website at <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/international/intlrsch/partnerships/showAgreementList.php>.