

**International Memoranda of Understanding (IMOU) Between  
The University of Iowa and Foreign Institutions:  
General Information and Guidelines**

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*The University of Iowa supports meaningful formal relationships with foreign universities and institutions. When they work optimally, such relationships bring a wide range of educational benefits, such as enabling both sides' faculty and students to study and conduct research abroad. These guidelines have been established in order to support UI units that seek to establish meaningful institution-to-institution relationships for the benefit of University of Iowa students, staff, and faculty.*

Types of agreements may include (but are not restricted to) student exchange, non-reciprocal study abroad programs, faculty/scholar/staff exchanges, research collaboration, materials exchanges (such as library materials), training and technical assistance, dual and joint degree programs, and admissions articulation agreements. In each case, an International Memorandum of Understanding (IMOU) should be signed before, or at the same time as, other, more specific agreements are processed. The General IMOU serves as a foundation upon which specific programs are built. The establishment of a General IMOU also allows for more expeditious processing of specific agreements, in the form of addenda to the IMOU.

Because an IMOU is a binding, legal contract, it is very important that each new formal agreement be entered into with the utmost seriousness and care. Individuals who are not currently employed by The University of Iowa may not initiate or be designated as the primary contact for an IMOU. **The Associate Provost and Dean of International Programs and the UI President must sign each new IMOU and renewal.**

A special note regarding student exchanges: Undergraduate or graduate student exchange may not be included in a general Memo of Understanding, because such exchanges obligate resources. **Student exchanges must be detailed in a separate, negotiated contract document.** Please contact the Director of the Office for Study Abroad for more information.

In initiating any new linkage agreement, UI faculty, staff and administrators are asked to first carefully consider the following questions. As a general rule, if any of the following elements is lacking, an IMOU should not be signed: 1) a history of cooperation between the two proposed partner institutions; 2) strong potential for mutual benefit; 3) compliance with 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 implicated in the agreement; and 7) a plan for regular program evaluation and renewal.

***Questions to Consider in Developing an International Memorandum of Understanding:***

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.** What is the history of the relationship with the foreign institution? With rare exceptions, The University of Iowa will only sign a formal agreement with a foreign institution to confirm the existence of a viable pattern of collaboration that has already been initiated, not to initiate a relationship.

**RECIPROCITY OF BENEFITS.** What relevant strengths does the foreign institution bring to the linkage? Why is this an appropriate institution with which to sign an agreement? What benefits will this

bring to the UI currently or in the future? Who are the UI faculty, staff and/or students who will benefit from this linkage?

**COMPLIANCE.** Do all elements of the agreement comply with U.S. federal law (including immigration, export/import and other regulations) and with the laws of the government of the proposed partner institution? Do all of the elements of the agreement comply with the rules and regulations of both partner institutions?

**SUPPORT.** What type of UI financial support has already been pledged or secured? What will be the source of this support? What type of support, if any, will the foreign institution provide during the first three years of the linkage? In addition to financial support, what arrangements are in place for other forms of support such as office space, secretarial/clerical assistance, or faculty course leave?

**COORDINATION.** What individual at each institution will be responsible for coordinating the activities that comprise the relationship, e.g., initiating publicity, communicating information to the other institution, etc? Is a back-up or secondary contact available, in case the primary contact is absent or unavailable for a period of time?

**EXTERNALITIES.** Has the initiating department received explicit support from all other departments, colleges and programs that are implicated as participants in the agreement? If elements of the agreement might represent a significant workload increase or other resource issue for administrative offices, have these offices been consulted?

**EVALUATION and RENEWAL.** How will the linkage be evaluated prior to the renewal of the agreement? What will the criteria be for a successful linkage? For what period will the agreement be in force? (University practice is to sign agreements for a period of three years, renewable with both sides' consent. This provides a regular occasion for those involved from both institutions to discuss the mutual value of the agreement. Shorter or, more rarely, longer periods in which an agreement will be in force can be requested when appropriate.)

Once the preceding questions have been answered, the initiating UI department or program may proceed by negotiating a preliminary IMOU with the proposed partner institution, using one of the templates provided by UI's International Programs or by completing an IMOU Worksheet and returning this information to the Director of International Programs. In many cases, the proposed partner institution may prefer to work from their own IMOU template. In this situation, it will be important to submit the draft document to the Director of International Programs for review before either party signs the agreement.

Once an IMOU draft has been reviewed and approved by all relevant parties, at least two original, hard-copy versions of the document will be routed for signatures. In some cases, a non-English version may also be required by the partner institution. The Associate Provost and Dean of International Programs and the UI President must sign each new IMOU and renewal. Other signatories, including deans and DEOs, may be included. One original, signed IMOU is kept by International Programs and another is kept by the partner institution. Initiating and participating departments and colleges may also keep an original or copy on file. IP maintains a database of all formal linkages and is responsible for sending a reminder to the designated UI contact for each IMOU before that agreement is due to expire. Depending on the nature of additional agreements that may be appended to the original IMOU, the AP/Dean of International Programs and the UI President may be required to sign these addenda. Initiating departments are advised to consult with the Director of International Programs before processing these additional agreements.