

What is an international cooperative partnership?

An international cooperative partnership is a reciprocal relationship between Minot State University and an institution outside of the U.S. in which the objective is to promote long-term cooperative activities. Typical partnership activities take the following general forms:

- Visits by and exchange of students for the purposes of study and research
- Visits by and interchange of faculty and/or staff for the purposes of research, teaching and discussions
- Exchange of information including, but not limited to exchange of library materials and research publications; joint research activities; joint participation in internationally funded projects; and joint course development and delivery.

A formal partnership results in operational ties developed through mutual agreement, provides mutual benefit, and requires mutual investment of resources.

Why are written agreements required to establish international partnerships?

International partnership agreements commit staff and faculty, as well as financial resources. Furthermore, partnership agreements represent contractual obligations and must be created in ways that are explicit and precise so that all parties can benefit from the agreement as intended. Carefully written agreements lead to tangible results, as well as prevent unintended effects such as the unintentional commitment of a department's resources.

Who can initiate an international partnership?

Sustainable partnerships most often stem from an existing collegial relationship rather than by being proposed administratively with no prior connection. Cooperative relationships are most successful when specific mutual goals or collaborative initiatives are articulated from the start. Therefore, the most fruitful partnerships are initiated on a department-to-department level, where initial, attainable collaborative activities are set forth.

What considerations should be discussed before initiating a partnership agreement?

Besides the obvious issue of time commitment from faculty members throughout the duration of the agreement, there are many other matters to consider. These include: determination of the foreign institution's recognition status and accreditation of concerned academic programs; academic and institutional similarities between MSU and the foreign institution; financial resources required to implement the proposed partnership activities; and coordination and implementation of program objectives

How are cooperative ideas translated into written agreements?

Partnership agreements include two types of documentation. The first is a "Memorandum of Agreement" (MOA) that is a general understanding between MSU and the foreign institution to cooperate in areas of academic development. The MOA is ideally accompanied by one or more separate and specific addendums that enable specific activities such as student or faculty exchanges, or program development or implementation. Addendums may be added with time as the relationship grows.

What is the procedure for approval?

Proposals to initiate new international cooperative partnerships should originate at the departmental level and will be approved at the institutional level. The chair or director of the sponsoring department must endorse the proposal before it will be considered for institutional approval. Once in place, an agreement then becomes campus-wide, under which any faculty member and/or student from either institution may participate. This process is illustrated in the enclosed flow chart.

What is the Office of International Programs' role in establishing partnerships?

The Office of International Programs serves as the primary resource and information center on campus for the development of international partnerships. The Director of International Programs brings a proposal of partnership to the International Advisory Committee for review and coordinates the approval and signing process. The Director of International Programs also works with the sponsoring faculty or department to develop and negotiate the Memorandum of Agreement and any accompanying addendum(s), if the proposal is approved.

Once an agreement is in place, the Office of International Programs will promote and manage exchange opportunities for students and faculty, and offer programmatic support when appropriate. Actual development and implementation of the initial partnership activities, however, falls upon the sponsoring department or faculty member(s).

Step by step: how to establish a new international partnership

The following steps should be taken by the sponsoring faculty or department in order to propose a new international cooperative partnership.

1. Determine whether the foreign institution is recognized by that country's Ministry of Education. Are the proposed academic programs recognized or accredited by an additional body or agency?
2. Identify a contact person at the foreign institution—this person is generally situated within an academic department equivalent to that of the MSU sponsoring department. Determine the foreign institution's level of interest in establishing a partnership with MSU.
3. Prepare a formal written proposal that includes basic information on the institution and envisioned initial collaborative activity. Include a budget that indicates the financial and personnel resources that will be dedicated to accomplishing the initial collaborative activities (see the attached proposal checklist).
4. Obtain written support from the MSU department chair by collecting signatures on the International Partnership Approval Form (attached).
5. Submit proposal to the MSU Director of International Programs for review by the International Advisory Committee. If the IAC recommends that the proposal be approved, it is then forwarded to the Vice President of Academic Affairs.
6. Upon approval from the VPAA, the sponsoring faculty will work with the Director of International Programs to complete a draft of the Memorandum of Agreement and any accompanying addendums. The OIP will assist in negotiating the agreement details and once final wording is agreed upon, the Director of International Programs will submit two copies of the MOA to the MSU President with a recommendation for signature.
7. Two copies of the approved and signed Memorandum of Agreement will be returned to the sponsoring faculty member/department for signature by the other institution.
8. A copy of the final MOA, after attaining all signatures, is to be returned to the Office of International Programs for archiving.

Written proposal checklist

Considerable thought and preparation must go into establishing a new international cooperative partnership. It is expected that the faculty member or department proposing a formal partnership will provide pertinent information about the international institution and initial cooperative activities envisioned. Further, in the case of a proposed student exchange agreement, the initiating department is expected to develop a listing of comparable courses offered at MSU and the partner institution (within that discipline).

The following items should be addressed in the formal written proposal:

- Background information about the international institution: basic information about its nature, size, mission, and ranking. Include a list of academics programs offered at the institution and the number of students enrolled (undergraduate and graduate). Additional material, such as institution brochures or international pamphlets may be helpful.
- Brief description of the geographical area where institution is located, and of the physical campus (residence halls, cafeteria, library, computer labs, etc).
- Identify the colleges, departments and/or disciplines that will be involved in the initial partnership activities. Are the proposed academic programs recognized, accredited or certified by an additional agency?
- Describe the initial cooperative activities envisioned. Mutual goals should be precise enough to allow for later review and evaluation. Development and implementation should be a joint effort by both institutions.
- Prepare a budget that addresses the financial and personnel resources required in order to accomplish the initial collaborative activities. Identify the funds that will be dedicated for such purposes.
- Describe the benefit to be derived by MSU from this relationship.
- Determine the effective date and duration of the agreement and a timetable for its review, evaluation, renewal, modification, and/or cancellation. What plans are in place to ensure success and growth of these activities?

**Submit the above in one package to:
Director, International Programs
1st floor of Student Center
Minot State University**

A complete proposal package will include the written proposal and the International Partnership Approval Form signed by Department Chair.



**Minot State
UNIVERSITY**

Office of International Programs

**International Partnership
Approval Form**

(Name of Institution, Country)

Proposal initiated by: _____
(Faculty name or department/division)

We, the undersigned, have read the attached proposal and support the initiative to establish a formal partnership with the above mentioned institution with the objective of promoting long-term cooperative activities.

Department/Division Chair Signature

Date

Chair of International Advisory Committee Signature

Date

Vice President of Academic Affairs Signature

Date

Appendix C- Steps to Initiate an International Partnership

