

**Academic Agreements with External Partners
Notification and Approval Process**

The Executive Vice President and University Provost (Provost) has sole decision-making authority to approve or deny any proposed academic agreements with external partners. Additionally, as the Chief Academic Affairs officer, the Provost has sole signing authority for all academic agreements with external agencies and partners. The Provost Program Proposal Review Committee (PPPRC) and this entire process are utilized to ensure relevant stakeholders conduct a priori review of proposed contractual relationships and provide the Provost with relevant and timely information to assist the Provost in deciding whether to pursue a partnership. The remainder of the process attempts to streamline the implementation of the required documentation to execute the agreement.

1.0 Types of Agreement

This process only governs agreements that meet the following criteria:

1. The agreement is with another legal entity that is not part of the University of Louisville. Agreements between UofL units are not governed by this process.

AND

2. One of the following conditions are met:
 - a. The agreement involves students taking classes for UofL academic credit.
 - b. The agreement involves coursework being transferred to UofL in fulfillment of degree requirements for a UofL academic credential.
 - c. The agreement involves an international site and/or partner.
 - d. The agreement involves another degree-granting higher education institution.

The following are the general types of agreements that are submitted for review under this process:

1.1 Eligible for Limited Review

Some agreements are afforded a limited review process because they are not specifically governed by SACSCOC or CPE standards or policies, have minimal legal and financial risks, and/or are routine and common arrangements for UofL. International agreements eligible for limited review are routed through the Office of Study Abroad and Student Travel, and the Manager of Global Initiatives coordinates and manages the review of such agreements. Domestic agreements eligible for limited review are routed through the Office of Academic Planning and Accountability, and the Coordinator of Accreditation coordinates and manages the review of such agreements. The following agreement types are eligible for limited review:

1. Study Abroad
 - a. Engaging with another party to allow students to complete some part of their degree program at an international educational institution. These are often accomplished through third parties, but they may be accomplished directly through partnering with another educational institution.
2. Student Exchange
 - a. An agreement to allow students to take courses at another institution through a reciprocal agreement where the institutions send students in each direction. These students take courses at the destination institution that are transferred to their home institution in fulfillment of their degree

requirements. They do not receive separate academic credentials. UofL students pay UofL tuition, and their tuition at the destination institution is waived. Likewise, the visiting students do the same.

3. International Facility Use Agreement (Non-Instructional Site)
 - a. An agreement to use a location for research or other purposes related to the mission of the institution, but not for classroom instruction. If the site is being used for classroom instruction, see definition 11, "Off-Campus Instructional Site."
4. Agreement to Begin Planning and Collaborating on Future Academic Initiatives (i.e., Paper Handshake)
 - a. These agreements carry little institutional risk, but they are often the initial first step in planning a larger academic partnership. The primary purpose of the review process for these types of agreements is to minimize reputational risk (i.e., harming the name, esteem, and/or distinction of UofL through the association with the partner institution) and verify whether UofL has an existing agreement with the proposed partner institution that may already meet the proposed objective.

1.2 **Require Full Review**

The following academic arrangements generally require a full PPPRC committee review because they involve students receiving academic credit toward degree completion, SACSCOC and/or CPE standards or policies specifically address these types of academic arrangements, and/or multiple offices manage the type of activities proposed in the agreement. The following agreement types require a full review:

5. Joint Degree
 - a. An agreement between UofL and other degree-granting institutions whereby students study at UofL and the partner institution(s) in pursuit of *one academic award* bearing the names, seals, and signatures of all participating institutions. (Source: SACSCOC)
6. Dual Degree
 - a. An agreement between UofL and other degree-granting institutions whereby students study at UofL and the partner institution(s) in pursuit of *separate academic awards at the same degree-level* bearing only the name, seal, and signatures of the institution conferring that particular award. (Source: SACSCOC)
7. Transfer Agreements
 - a. An agreement between UofL and a partner institution to accept credits from the partner institution in fulfillment of a degree at UofL. UofL does not transcript any partner courses as being taught by UofL, and it results in the student receiving one degree from UofL with all credits being transferred at the same degree level.
8. Faculty Exchanges
 - a. An agreement for faculty members to teach or conduct research at a partner institution (either domestic or international) while a faculty member from the partner institution does the same at UofL. Any visiting faculty members who are the instructor of record for a UofL course must comply with the UofL faculty credentialing policy.

9. Research Agreements
 - a. An agreement to share and partner on specified research activities. Such agreements may require additional approval from the Office of Research and Innovation.
10. Continuation Pathway
 - a. Similar to a transfer agreement with a partner institution, but it results in the student being awarded two degrees at different degree levels (e.g., 3+2 baccalaureate to master's, etc.). These are sometimes referred to as accelerated programs because they generally allow a student to begin graduate coursework that also counts toward the degree requirements for an undergraduate degree.
11. Off-Campus Instructional Site (OCIS)
 - a. A location other than online or the main campus where UofL offers credit-bearing classroom instruction. This does not include internship sites or other types of experiential education that are not classroom based and location-bound. (Source: SACSCOC)
12. Other Entities Teaching Courses Accepted and Transcribed as UofL Credit
 - a. An agreement for another institution or entity to teach classes, which are transcribed as UofL courses. These courses are not entirely under UofL control, and UofL transcribes them as UofL courses in fulfillment of degree requirements. Additionally, any faculty who provide instruction for UofL credit under such agreements must comply with the UofL Faculty Credentials Reporting guidelines to ensure compliance with SACSCOC accreditation standards. (Source: SACSCOC Standard 10.9)

2.0 Provost Program Proposal Review Committee (PPPRC)

The PPPRC is the standing group of administrators and staff who review all proposals submitted under this process and provides their recommendation to the Provost about whether such proposals should be enacted and the potential implications of the arrangement if enacted. From time to time, the PPPRC invites additional University administrators to committee meetings if the specific nature of the request implicates that administrator's responsibilities, but the following are the standing members of the committee:

- Vice Provost for Assessment and University Decision Support/Analytics, liaison to SACSCOC (Convener)
- Assistant University Counsel (Adviser)
- Accreditation Fellow
- Associate Vice President of Budget and Financial Planning
- Associate Vice President for Research and Innovation (or designee)
- Dean of the Graduate School and Vice Provost for Graduate Affairs
- Director of the Office of Study Abroad and International Travel
- Associate Provost of Online Learning and Technology
- Vice President Risk, Audit, and Compliance (or designee)
- Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs
- Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education

When reviewing a proposal, the PPPRC may take one of the following actions:

1. request additional information,
2. submit for Provost's consideration without reservations,
3. forward for Provost's consideration with reservations and/or concerns, or
4. deny the request if the proposal violates a written policy or provided guidance from the Provost.

This group has a standing monthly meeting that is held as an opt-out meeting. While the convener or designee must be present at all meetings, the remaining committee members may recuse themselves if the proposals do not impact their job responsibilities and/or functional role at the institution. As an example, if the proposals under consideration do not involve distance education or online education, the Associate Provost of Online Learning and Technology may recuse themselves. They do not have to do so, but they have the option since the enacted agreements from the proposals would not affect their functional area.

3.0 Academic Agreements Advisory Group (AAAG)

To manage the process, the PPPRC has delegated certain authority to a group of staff members who coordinate the various types of arrangements governed by this process. Those individuals are the following:

- Manager of Global Initiatives
- Coordinator of Accreditation

This group performs the following functions to manage the process of establishing academic arrangements:

- Advises academic administrators and faculty members who are interested in establishing an academic arrangement, so they can navigate the process for Provost consideration.
- Conducts initial reviews of proposals to ensure all necessary documentation are provided and to request additional information from the submitting party to better facilitate a timely review by the PPPRC. Information requested in this step does not have to be submitted, but requesting such information minimizes the likelihood the PPPRC declines to submit the proposal for Provost consideration or delay the approval process due to a lack of information to make an informed recommendation.
- Reviews proposals to determine if they can be routed through the limited review process or require a full PPPRC review.
- Coordinates the meeting schedules, takes meeting minutes, and prepares the agenda.
- Drafts the responses from the PPPRC to synthesize them into one set of recommendations to be submitted to the Provost for consideration.
- Coordinates with the submitting party to draft and revise the agreement, and consults with University Counsel, Risk Management, and other relevant stakeholders to mitigate risk to the institution and comply with university policy.

- Proactively contacts academic administrators with expiring agreements to assist with the renewal process as necessary.

This group has standing bi-weekly meetings (i.e., every two weeks) to review any submissions received within that timeframe and discuss additional information needed. During this meeting, they also assign a point person depending upon the primary issues presented by the relationship who coordinates the response to the submitting party for that proposal throughout the process.

4.0 Timeline and Process

The review process for all proposals meeting the definitions set forth in this document are as follows:

4.1 Submission Phase

1. Initial submission of proposal
 - a. If desired, individuals who wish to submit a proposal may consult with the AAAG in advance. This step is optional.
 - b. The individual requesting the academic agreement submits the Academic Agreements with External Partners Proposal. This form includes two confirmatory statements in addition to the submission fields to collect information about the proposed program. The submitting party must confirm the dean of the academic unit engaging in the agreement is supportive of the submission, and the associate dean who oversees any curriculum affected by the proposal is also supportive of it and has engaged with their internal curriculum review process as necessary.

4.2 AAAG Review Phase

2. AAAG conducts initial reviews and sorts proposals within 10 business days of submission.
 - a. The AAAG conducts an initial review of the requested relationship. During this review, they do the following:
 - i. ensure all required information is included in the proposal,
 - ii. identify additional information that may be requested by the PPPRC,
 - iii. determine if the proposal is eligible for limited review or requires full review and route it accordingly, and
 - iv. assign a point person from the AAAG to manage the process.
3. AAAG requests additional information within 2 business days of AAAG review.
 - a. If necessary, the point person assigned the proposal requests additional information from the submitting party to facilitate the review. If all required information was submitted, the proposal is submitted for PPPRC review regardless of whether the additional information is provided. Any additional information being requested is a courtesy to help the review process be timelier and more efficient.

4.3 PPPRC Full Review Phase (if required)

4. The PPPRC reviews proposals requiring full review within five weeks of submission.
 - a. The Coordinator of Accreditation sends the PPPRC the meeting agenda and all proposals by no later than 5 business days in advance of the meeting.

- b. The Coordinator of Accreditation invites the Dean, Associate Dean, and/or submitting party to the meeting to present their proposals and answer questions directly from the PPPRC. These individuals are excused when the PPPRC enters executive session to discuss the proposal and make a recommendation.
- c. During the meeting, the Coordinator of Accreditation takes meeting minutes. Additionally, he and the other individuals present in a support capacity provide information as requested. The convener runs the meeting. At the end of the meeting, the Coordinator of Accreditation reviews the recommendations for each proposal to ensure accuracy.

4.4 Recommendation Phase

5. The PPPRC recommendations are sent to the Provost for consideration within five business days of the meeting.
 - a. The Coordinator of Accreditation sends the PPPRC a draft of the email to be sent to the Provost with the committee's recommendations for their review. The PPPRC has two business days to respond with any revisions or amendments. If the PPPRC does not respond with revisions, the recommendations are assumed to be accurate.
 - b. The Vice Provost for Assessment and University Decision Support/Analytics sends the Provost the PPPRC formal recommendation, and they carbon copy the Provost's Chief of Staff, the PPPRC, the AAAG, and any other OAPA support staff in attendance at the meeting.
6. The Provost makes a final decision and communicates it to the Vice Provost for Assessment and University Decision Support/Analytics. The Coordinator of Accreditation emails the requesting party and carbon copies the PPPRC, Provost, and the Provost's Chief of Staff to notify them of the Provost's decision as well as next steps in the process.

4.5 Agreement Phase

7. If the proposal was approved, the point of contact from the AAAG assists the point of contact within the academic unit with next steps. All agreements are reviewed by the Office of University Counsel prior to execution. The AAAG has pre-approved agreements that are used for most routine agreements, but all revisions to the standardized agreements require the Office of University Counsel to review and approve.
8. The Vice Provost for Assessment and University Decision Support/Analytics conducts a review prior to execution of all agreements resulting from a proposal requiring full review. All agreements should be for a 3- to 5-year term.
9. All agreements involving the awarding of credit from UofL or the acceptance of credit from another institution in fulfillment of degree requirements for a UofL academic award must include identified course equivalencies and/or an approved curriculum as an attachment to the agreement. The Provost will not execute any such agreement without these attachments being reviewed and approved through standard UofL processes for course evaluations and/or curriculum approvals.
10. Upon approval, the AAAG point of contact sends the final draft of the agreement to the point of contact within the academic unit, and they carbon copy all members of the PPPRC as well as the Provost Chief of Staff.

11. The point of contact within the academic unit sends the agreement to the partner institution to review. Once final negotiations of the terms of the agreement have begun, the Assistant University Counsel should be cc'ed on all correspondence with partner institutions to represent UofL during the negotiations. Any revised terms of the agreement proposed by the partner institution must also be reviewed by the AAAG prior to execution.
12. Upon full execution of the agreement, all parties involved in this process receive the fully executed agreement. These parties generally include members of the PPPRC, Office of the Provost, the submitting party from the academic unit, and the dean of the academic unit.

5.0 Revisions and Renewals

Annually in March, the Coordinator of Accreditation emails the point of contact for all active academic agreements, and the Manager of Global Initiatives emails the point of contact for all other agreement types governed by this procedure. This email is a courtesy to verify whether the agreement is still active, to inquire about necessary revisions, and if necessary, to remind the point of contact within the academic unit about an expiring agreement.

5.1 Revisions During the Term of the Agreement

If the agreement requires revisions during its term, the AAAG in consultation with the Office of University Counsel determines how to route the revisions based upon the type of revisions being requested. In general, revisions are handled with an addendum and only require limited review (see Section 1.1) unless one of the following are revised:

1. Term (i.e., expiration date) of the agreement
2. Type of agreement as outlined in Section 1 (e.g., adding a dual degree to a student exchange, etc.)
3. Financial relationship (e.g., cost apportionment, revenue split, etc.)
4. Delivery of educational content (e.g., adding online delivery method, adding an educational partner, etc.)
5. Student support services available (e.g., closing a library, eliminating in-person services for an OCIS, etc.)
6. Other changes materially affecting the end user experience of the relationship

All the above changes are deemed substantive changes. Renewals or revisions with substantive changes are covered in Section 5.2.2.

5.2 Review Process of Existing Agreements and Renewals

All renewal requests should be submitted for review by the PPPRC at least 90 days prior to the end of the agreement term.

5.2.1 Renewal process with minor or no revisions

For academic arrangements that are being renewed with no substantive changes with the existing type of agreement remaining in place, the process is the following.

1. In March of the academic year immediately preceding the academic year in which the agreement is scheduled to expire, the AAAG notifies the point of contact for the agreement of the upcoming renewal period. This notification is a courtesy.

2. If the point of contact wishes to renew the agreement, they submit the following documents for PPPRC consideration at least three months prior to the expiration of the existing contract:
 - a. A report providing evidence of the relative success of the initiative considering the original proposal. While this report is individually tailored to the type of academic arrangement in place, it generally includes the following information:
 - i. Enrollment
 - ii. Degrees Conferred
 - iii. Faculty Involvement
 - iv. Student Learning Outcomes
 - v. Evidence of Achieving an Aspect of the University Strategic Plan
 - vi. Net Revenue Generated
 - vii. Lessons Learned

 - b. The existing agreement with any minor revisions redlined. If the revisions change the type of agreement in place, such changes must be considered as another proposal requiring a full review and submission of a new Academic Agreements with External Partners form.

5.2.2 *Renewal process with major revisions altering the type of agreement in place*

If the point of contact wishes to renew the agreement with the partner but make substantive changes, the academic unit must submit an entirely new Academic Agreements with External Partners form, and the entire review process begins anew. In effect, this is a new relationship, which must be evaluated. As part of this process, the reporting elements listed in 5.2.1 should be included as part of the review process.

5.2.3 *Ending an agreement*

If the point of contact from the academic unit does not wish to renew the agreement, they should notify OAPA and/or the International Center of the desire to let the agreement expire. Other than that notification, no further action is required. However, the PPPRC may request review of a partnership as a useful point of comparison if an academic unit is requesting a similar arrangement with a different partner in the future.