University of Louisville  
Consortial Agreements Policy  
Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards: Policy and Procedures

Section I. Background and Definitions

At the University of Louisville collaborative relationships generally fall into three categories: Consortial Degrees, Affiliation agreements, or Academic Partnerships. Whether the relationship between or among institutions is called an agreement, a memorandum of understanding (MOU), an affiliation, a partnership, a collaboration, or some other term is not significant from a SACSCOC policy perspective. What matters is whether or not an academic award results from the relationship.

The SACSCOC policy focuses on agreements involving joint and dual academic awards. This includes agreements involving the awarding of academic completion awards (e.g., certificates, diplomas, or degrees) (a.k.a. “award”). If the relationship results in a dual award or joint award it must meet the requirements of the SACSCOC policy. Agreements with non-SACSCOC accredited schools or partners must include a SACSCOC Disclaimer Statement. See the SACSCOC policy at http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/JointDualAwards.pdf

SACSCOC Disclaimer:
The University of Louisville (UofL) is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award associate, bachelor's, master's, specialists, doctoral, and professional degrees. [Name of partner institution] is not accredited by SACS Commission on Colleges and the accreditation of UofL does not extend to or include [name of partner institution] or its students. Further, although UofL agrees to accept certain course work from [name of partner institution] to be applied toward an award from UofL, that course work may not be accepted by other colleges or universities in transfer, even if it appears on a transcript from UofL. The decision to accept course work in transfer from any institution is made by the institution considering the acceptance of credits or course work.

Consortial Degree agreements between institutions that are 1) accredited by SACSCOC, or 2) have other accreditation, or 3) non-accredited degree-granting institutions of higher education will fall into one of two categories:

1. Dual award – An agreement by 2 or more institutions whereby students study at 2 or more institutions and each institution grants a separate academic award bearing only its name, seal, and signature.

2. Joint award – An agreement by 2 or more institutions whereby students study at 2 or more institutions and the institutions grant a single academic award bearing the names, seals, and signatures of each of the participating institutions.

Consortial degree agreements must address the requirements of the SACSCOC policy.

Affiliation agreements that provide for practicums/internships/coops/field experiences that do not result in an academic award are not subject to the provisions of this policy but will require some internal administrative review and may have to meet other less stringent SACSCOC or UofL requirements. Affiliation agreements for out-of-state placements will be subject to the State Authorization requirements of that location.
**Academic Partnership** agreements with a consortial partner, contract vendor, or other non-educational third party are not subject to the provisions of the SACSCOC Dual/Joint Academic Awards Policy. These types of partnerships can include:

1. University degree programs or courses offered under contract with an external entity. This scenario could be a UofL offering taking place off-campus (ex: General Electric), or internationally (ex: Akademie Adolph Wurth in Germany), or an outside partner under contract to provide university-sponsored instruction (e.g. iLaw Ventures).

2. Group educational consortiums that allow for course exchange but do not result in a degree award. (e.g., Metroversity)

3. Cooperation agreements with external entities to provide educational support (e.g., tuition adjustments or fee waivers) or to develop plans for future initiatives.

4. Student Exchanges or study abroad programs.

Agreements not subject to the provisions of the SACS Joint/Dual Degree Policy may require a Substantive Change report to SACSCOC. The UofL accreditation liaison should be consulted when developing a consortial agreement (excludes Affiliation Agreements). For more information about the Substantive Change policy, see [http://louisville.edu/oapa/substantive-change](http://louisville.edu/oapa/substantive-change)

Any cost to students participating in these agreements must be communicated to the student by the responsible unit or program or by the university during the registration process.

**Section II. Dual or Joint Award Requirements**

1. UofL must provide SACSCOC with notification of any dual or joint award agreements, including copies of the agreements and other required documentation/information about the agreements.

2. SACSCOC prohibits use of UofL's SACSCOC accreditation to authenticate courses, programs, or awards offered by UofL's partner organizations not so accredited.

3. UofL Dual or Joint agreements with institutions not accredited by SACSCOC must contain the SACSCOC-required disclaimer statement [template supplied by SACSCOC] when describing the relationship for any agreement. See Section I above for template statement.)

4. For agreements covering undergraduate degree awards – 25% or more of the credits required for the award must be earned through the SACSOC member’s own direct instruction. Direct instruction can either be face-to-face or via distance education that is provided by UofL instructors.

5. For agreements covering graduate degree awards – 1/3 or more of the credits must be earned through the SACSCOC member’s own direct instruction. Direct instruction can either be face-to-face or via distance education that is provided by UofL instructors.

6. The SACSCOC logo cannot be used in materials or websites related to the Dual or Joint degree.

7. Specific program review and assessment language is to be incorporated into the agreement with the partner institution.
8. The SACSCOC requirements and standards as outlined in the SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation are to be considered when developing agreements with partner institutions and addressed in the resulting agreement document. (See Ensure Compliance with Appropriate SACSCOC Requirements on page 3 of http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/JointDualAwards.pdf)

9. When evaluating and accepting credits awarded through a joint or dual award agreement, the member institution must ensure the quality of the credits recorded on its transcript. (See Ensure the Quality of Credits Recorded on Transcripts on page 2 of http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/JointDualAwards.pdf)

A. Dual Award Requirements

1. Entering into a dual award agreement requires six months (prior to implementation) notification to SACSCOC along with sending a signed copy of the agreement to SACSCOC (It is treated as a substantive change.)

2. Formal written approval from SACSCOC is required before implementation of the agreement.

B. Joint Award Requirements

Category 1 Joint award where all partners are SACSCOC accredited

1. Entering into this type of joint award requires six months (prior to implementation) notification to SACSCOC along with sending a final signed copy of the agreement to SACSCOC. (It is treated as a substantive change.)

2. Formal written approval from SACSCOC is required before implementation of the agreement.

3. The agreement is to describe the partner(s)’ individual responsibility for the academic quality of any course work or credit awarded on the institution’s transcript and accepted toward a joint award. This description should include language describing regular assessment and evaluation of the program and its learning outcomes, learning resources, and the physical space that will support the collaboration.

4. If the joint award involves offering 50 percent or more of a program at a previously unapproved off-campus site or involves offering a new program that is significantly different from currently offered approved programs, notification to SACSCOC is due six months prior to the implementation date, with a prospectus for approval due at least three months prior to implementation.

Category 2 Joint award where at least one partner is accredited by an accrediting body other than SACSCOC

1. Entering into this type of joint award requires six months (prior to implementation) notification to SACSCOC along with sending a signed copy of the agreement to SACSCOC. (It is treated as a substantive change.)

2. Formal written approval from SACSCOC is required before implementation of the agreement.

3. The agreement is to describe the individual partners’ responsibility for the academic quality of any course work or credit awarded on the institution’s transcript and accepted toward a joint award and include language describing regular assessment and evaluation of the program and
its learning outcomes, learning resources, and the physical space that will support the collaboration.

4. Additional documentation to be supplied:
   a. Letter of notification that includes a statement of intent, the anticipated date for the agreement, a description of the proposed agreement, the address/location of each institution, and information for the contact person at each participating institution.
   b. Documentation that non-SACSCOC-accredited partners are not on a public sanction with their accrediting bodies.
   c. Documentation that the courses or program of the non-SACSCOC-accredited partner institution(s) are consistent with the educational purpose and goals of the SACSCOC accredited institution(s).
   d. Documentation that the institution meets the provisions of SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard 10.9 (Cooperative academic arrangements), including the analysis of credits accepted in transfer.
   e. A plan to monitor and ensure that the quality of contributions made by partner institution(s) meet SACSCOC expectations.
   f. A plan and process produced by the SACSCOC-accredited institution(s) ensuring that the agreement for the joint award does not result in the appearance that SACSCOC accreditation is being extended to partner institutions who are not SACSCOC accredited.
   g. Prototypes of official academic documents (e.g., student transcript, degree, diploma, certificate, etc.) involved in the agreement.

5. If the joint award involves offering 50 percent or more of a program at a previously unapproved off-campus site or involves offering a new program that is significantly different from currently offered approved programs, notification to SACSCOC is due six months prior to the implementation date, with a prospectus for approval due at least three months prior to implementation.

**Category 3 Joint award where at least one partner is not U.S. Department of Education accredited**

1. Entering into this type of joint award requires six months (prior to implementation) notification to SACSCOC along with sending a signed copy of the agreement to SACSCOC (It is treated as a substantive change.)
2. Formal written approval from SACSCOC is required before implementation of the agreement.
3. The agreement is to describe the individual partners' responsibility for the academic quality of any course work or credit awarded on the institution’s transcript and accepted toward a joint award and include language describing regular assessment and evaluation of the program and its learning outcomes, learning resources, and the physical space that will support the collaboration.
4. Additional documentation to be supplied:
   a. Letter of notification that includes a statement of intent, the anticipated date for the agreement, a description of the proposed agreement, the address/location of each institution, and information for the contact person at each participating institution.
   b. Documentation of (1) any external governmental or accrediting agency approval for the institution(s)' or program(s)' involvement in the agreement (excluding the SACSCOC
accredited institution[s]); (2) the process of quality assurance used by the agency granting this approval; and (3) any required legal or licensing approvals.

c. Documentation that the courses or program of the non-SACSCOC-accredited partner institution(s) are consistent with the educational purpose and goals of the SACSCOC-accredited institution(s).

d. Documentation that the institution meets the provisions of SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard 10.9 (Cooperative Academic Arrangements), including the analysis of credits accepted in transfer.

e. Documentation that the faculty members involved in the collaboration are qualified to teach assigned components or courses and a description of the means used by the SACSCOC-accredited institution(s) to monitor these qualifications. Also include a completed SACSCOC Faculty Roster Form.

f. A plan to monitor and ensure that the quality of contributions made by partner institution(s) meets SACSCOC expectations.

g. A plan and process produced by the SACSCOC-accredited institution(s) for ensuring that the agreement for the joint award does not result in the appearance that SACSCOC accreditation is being extended to partner institutions who are not SACSCOC accredited.

h. Prototypes of official academic documents (e.g., student transcript, degree, diploma, certificate, etc.) involved in the agreement.

6. If the joint award involves offering 50 percent or more of a program at a previously unapproved off-campus site or involves offering a new program that is significantly different from currently offered approved programs, notification to SACSCOC is due six months prior to the implementation date, with a prospectus for approval due at least three months prior to implementation.

In addition to the above, SACSCOC may request additional information when necessary to ensure compliance with SACSCOC requirements.

Section III. State Authorization Regulations
State Authorization is a regulatory process whereby states require higher education institutions from other states to obtain the state’s approval before enrolling students, advertising, marketing, or performing other regulated activities in their state whether via distance education, practical or clinical experiences, or other face-to-face activities (e.g., student services, proctored exams, etc.).

For more information, please consult the university website http://louisville.edu/stateauthorization or contact the UofL State Authorization Analyst Kathryn Cross at kathryn.cross@louisville.edu.