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**SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS****1. Purpose of International Agreements**

The University of Northern British Columbia enters into a limited number of international exchange agreements in order to promote knowledge of other societies, languages and academic communities.

These linkages provide important opportunities for intellectual exchange and the development of cross-cultural awareness and global perspectives. International exchanges should be compatible with the mission of the University and should either complement or enhance UNBC's existing academic programs.

**2. Criteria**

Before pursuing or renewing any international exchange agreements, the following criteria must be considered:

**Mission and Mandate:**

- Does the linkage fit the mission and mandate of UNBC as outlined in Planning for Growth?
- What strengths does the partner university have to offer UNBC or vice versa?

**Academic and Research Compatibility:**

- Does the potential linkage complement UNBC's existing programs?
- Will UNBC faculty, students and staff be able to advance/enhance their study or work at UNBC through participation in this international linkage?
- Will students and faculty from the partner institution fit into UNBC's programs and courses?
- Are faculty members likely to find common research interests amongst the faculty of the partner institution?

**Viability/Sustainability:**

- Does the linkage provide opportunities for a number of faculty and/or students within the institution, College or Program as the case may be?
- Is the linkage likely to endure even if the initial contact people leave UNBC or the partner institution?
- Does the linkage have widespread support at the relevant level, i.e. within the Program, College or at the institutional level?
- Are there sufficient financial resources at our University or accessible through other agencies to support a long-term commitment to this international linkage?
- If the language of instruction is not the same at both institutions are instructional programs offered in the other's language or will students and faculty be able to participate in a meaningful way in the language of the host institutions?
- In light of the needs and resources of our University, is it wise to establish a linkage in this

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particular part of the world?

New Opportunities:

- Does the linkage provide new opportunities or does it replace opportunities that are available in existing agreements?
- What is the potential impact of this linkage on existing linkages?

### 3. Responsibility for International Agreements

The SCAPP Sub-committee on International Agreements are established to facilitate the development of academic agreements between UNBC and various international partners. It also has the responsibility to review future and existing linkages to ensure that they promote the mission and mandate of the University, and that linkages provide a variety of opportunities for students, faculty and staff of all academic programs.

The Office of International Programs has a mandate to facilitate the negotiation and administration of agreements. It serves as a central repository for information pertaining to future and existing international linkages.

### 4. Types of Agreement

Agreements may be entered into at the level of the institution, College or Program.

- An institutional linkage is one which has the potential to involve students, faculty or staff from more than one College.
- College or Program linkages are those where the potential involvement is confined to the particular College or Program in question.

International agreements may also be entered into for a variety of purposes. They may range from simple student exchanges to comprehensive institutional agreements.

- An agreement may be entered into for one specific purpose such as student or faculty exchanges or joint research.
- A comprehensive agreement is one which involves student, faculty and staff exchanges, joint research, the exchange of publications and other materials, and other related purposes.
- UNBC may also enter into a limited number of “friendship” agreements which do not commit the University to specific exchanges of people or research but are a means of mutual recognition.

UNBC may be party to exchange agreements which are either bilateral or multilateral in nature.

- A bilateral agreement will involve UNBC and only one international partner.
- A multilateral agreement will involve a number of exchange partners who agree to form a consortium for the purpose of facilitating exchanges. A multilateral agreement would also include something like the Canada-Taiwan Student Mobility Project which was negotiated

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and signed at the national level.

## 5. Policies and Procedures for Negotiating International Agreements

### Proposing and Initiating International Linkages:

1. All international agreements, which constitute an investment of university resources and personnel, must be approved by Senate prior to ratification. Normally, individual research projects, which involve colleagues in other countries, do not constitute international agreements (unless they involve colleagues from UNBC's existing international partners, in which case the protocol agreement will prevail). Research projects of this nature are under the purview of the Office of Research and Graduate Studies.
2. The process for obtaining Senate approval for international linkages is as follows:
  - Institutional agreements: A proposal demonstrating a linkage's potential in terms of the purpose outlined in Section I and the criteria detailed in Section II should be submitted for review to the SCAPP Sub-Committee on International Agreements (SSCIA). Those proposing the linkages must demonstrate interest in and commitment to the linkage on the part of a good cross-section of academic programs throughout the institution. The proposal should be submitted to the staff of the Office of International Programs who will ensure that it is discussed by the SSCIA in a timely manner. The primary proponents of the linkage will be asked to speak to the proposal at the next meeting of the SSCIA and will be informed of the Committee's recommendation in due course.
  - College level agreements: Proposals for College level agreements should be discussed by College Councils prior to being submitted to the SSCIA for review. As with institutional agreements, a proposal which shows how the potential agreement meets the purposes and criteria outlined in this document must be submitted in writing to the SSCIA. In the case of College level agreements, the proposal should demonstrate an interest in and commitment to the linkage on the part of a good cross-section of academic programs throughout the College. The primary proponents of the linkage will be asked to speak to the proposal at a future meeting of the SSCIA and will be informed of the Committee's recommendation in due course.
  - Program level agreements: Proposals for these agreements should also be forwarded to the SSCIA for approval prior to the commencement of formal negotiations. The proposal should be discussed by the Program Council and the appropriate College Council prior to submission to the SSCIA.
  - Notwithstanding all of the above, constraints on the part of potential partner institutions may cause the Committee to modify the level of the agreement.

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- c. Prior to the submission of a proposal, any contact with the potential international partner should be conducted on an informal basis only. The purpose of such contact is to make a preliminary investigation into the possible benefit of a linkage and should not commit the institution or any of its units in any way. The SSCIA should be informed of preliminary investigations via the Office of International Programs.

#### Negotiation of Agreements:

- a. If the SSCIA is satisfied that the proposed agreement meets the purposes and criteria as outlined in this document, formal contact will be initiated. This formal contact will begin with a letter from UNBC's President (or designate) to the CEO of the potential partner. This letter should include the following:
- A rationale for the proposed agreement and a clear definition of its perceived mutual advantages
  - The strengths of UNBC
  - An inquiry of interest in joint investigations of the feasibility of the proposed linkage through further correspondence, and on-site visits
  - A suggested procedure or protocol for negotiating the agreement. In the case of institutional agreements, the Office of International Programs (OIP) and its counterpart at the foreign institution will normally handle this negotiation of agreements
  - A suggested time limit within which a response is expected.
- b. Further negotiations may be conducted through correspondence or face to face where possible. While the responsibility for negotiating an international exchange agreement may be assumed by the President, Vice-President (Academic), staff of the OIP, the Dean of a College, a Program Chair or designate, it should be clear who has primary responsibility.

Negotiations will include the drafting of an agreement that is acceptable to both parties. The format of this agreement can be taken from a generally accepted document which can be adapted where necessary. In some cases, a general agreement of cooperation may be negotiated initially which will then be followed by separate protocols for specific areas of cooperation.

3. In the case where UNBC is approached by an international institution with a request to consider a linkage, the request will be forwarded to the potentially interested unit to see if it wishes to proceed with the linkage.

#### Final Approval of the Negotiated Agreement

Once a mutually acceptable agreement is arrived at, the draft document will be sent to SSCIA for review. Program level agreements should be approved by the appropriate Program and College Councils prior to being forwarded to the SSCIA. The appropriate College Council should approve college level agreements. Once an agreement has been reviewed by the SSCIA, the Committee will make a positive or a negative recommendation to SCAPP. SCAPP and then Senate will determine whether the agreement will be approved or not. After an agreement has been approved by Senate, it will be signed by UNBC's President, the Vice-President (Academic) and the equivalent officers at the partner institution.

#### Critical Issues for Drafting Exchange Agreements:

The following issues should be resolved by the final draft of the agreement. The resolutions should be outlined in the final document as appropriate.

- the goals of the agreement
- the types of activities that will be part of the agreement

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- the minimum/maximum number of students, faculty and staff to be involved in the exchange in a given academic year
  - faculty or staff salaries and benefits, housing, transportation, provision for replacement of faculty members or staff while abroad, and any change in status which might occur as a result of an overseas appointment
  - the financial responsibilities of each institution in terms of travel, salary, housing, board, tuition stipends, overheads, teaching and research materials (laboratory supplies, books, library facilities, office space, etc.)
  - possibilities for “in kind” support as well as direct financial provisions
  - student tuition, housing, board, stipend, transportation, provision for inter-session housing and cultural opportunities
  - status of participation in an overseas program in relation to degree requirements at the home institutions
  - level of language proficiency and academic standing needed for participation in the program
  - a plan and procedure for mutual reviews and evaluation of the linkage and its renewal
  - the names of the office or person(s) responsible for administering the agreement
  - provisions for cancellation of the agreement and
  - a specific time period between notice and withdrawal from the linkage

#### Timeline for Submitting Proposals for International Linkages

Proposals for international linkages should be submitted to the SSCIA one year to 18 months prior to the desired start date.