Administrative Policy and Guidelines on International Agreements

Policy Goal and Rationale

As RIT continues to internationalize, its connections to international partners will likely proliferate and become more strategically important to the University and more central to the educational experiences we provide our students. The following guidelines are intended to both facilitate the creation of such agreements and to ensure that all international agreements are vetted with an eye to the best interests of the University. These guidelines are intended to provide support for agreements which involve the exchange of students, exchange of faculty, the development of joint curriculum with international partner institutions, and the intention to enter into international research projects. The guidelines, and associated process, do not pertain to international recruiting agreements or agreements which involve unilateral funding of international students attending RIT—those agreements are the purview of the Division of Enrollment Management. Further, these guidelines, and associated process, are not intended to conflict with any existing process related to sponsored international research agreements—those agreements are the purview of the Vice President for Research. Additionally, these guidelines and processes are not intended to cover faculty research activities with international colleagues where issues such as intellectual property, funding, export control and other issues are not involved.

Types of International Agreements

International agreements between RIT and institutions abroad can range from informal agreements to collaborate in areas of common interest with few formal commitments, to formal contracts that obligate one or both partners to perform specific actions or provide specific services to the other. The more general of these typically takes the form of a Memoranda of Understanding which is often supported by specific implementing agreements. Thus, international agreements tend to fall into two broad categories:

1. **Memoranda of Understanding (MOU)** – this type of document is an agreement to explore partnership activities with another university. While an MOU does not express a commitment to any specific activity, it does represent a serious commitment to explore possibilities and an assumption that the proposing unit has a reasonable expectation that the activity will be implemented. These documents should be viewed as the basis for exploration and an opportunity to refine goals related to specific academic and program goals of a partnership. Thus, these documents should follow a generally consistent format and review process to avoid premature commitment of resources and to ensure consistency in the general nature of the exploratory agreements we pursue. However, these agreements generally do not involve a legal obligation to provide services among the partners, but rather refer to separate implementing agreements to detail specific obligations.

2. **International Implementation Agreements** – these documents are typically utilized for detailing the obligations of partners to student exchanges, faculty exchanges, dual and joint degree program agreements, research collaborations, joint curriculum development,
sharing of instructional materials and study abroad affiliation agreements. These agreements will almost always involve the explicit commitment of specific resources on the part of the partnering institutions. In addition, these agreements often commit faculty, staff, and students to international travel and may involve the international exchange of research and technology. The general risks associated with international travel and site visits, combined with evolving Federal policy on international technology transfer, warrant a degree of centralized oversight to ensure RIT is both prudent and compliant. As a result, implementation agreements will necessarily require a higher level of input, discussion, and oversight on the part of participating faculty and administrative units. Specific types of implementation agreements include but are not limited to the following:

a. International student exchange agreements—where RIT and an international partner, or group of partners, agree to bilateral exchange of students and describe the academic framework and financial terms of the exchange.

b. International faculty exchange agreements—where RIT and an international partner, or group of partners, agree to bilateral exchange of faculty and describe the expectations of faculty and financial framework for the exchange.

c. Study abroad affiliation agreements—where RIT and an international institution, or a third party service provider, agree to the academic, experiential, and financial terms of a study abroad experience.

d. International research collaboration agreements—where RIT and an international partner, or partners, agree to collaborate on research and describe the terms for student and faculty participation, the sharing of related resources, and resulting intellectual products and property. These issues will typically be addressed in the context of sponsored funding arrangements under guidelines and systems managed by the Sponsored Research Services and the Vice President for Research.

e. International joint and dual degree agreements—where RIT and an international partner, or group of partners, agree to develop dual or joint degree programs and describe the academic, financial, and student support framework for the degrees.

f. International hosting and internship agreements—where RIT and an international partner agree to terms for hosting students, and/or faculty, for international internships, cooperative education experiences, and practicum.

The Associate Provost for International Education and Global Programs, working in conjunction with the Office of Legal Affairs, has developed templates for International Memorandums of Understanding. These templates serve as the general framework for most agreements and will accommodate the nuances of specific agreements. The Office of Legal Affairs is the primary campus resource for most types of implementing agreements and will be involved either developing or reviewing agreements which legally commit RIT resources to a partnership.

Process

International agreements may be initiated at different levels within the university, however care must be taken to ensure departmental and college level agreements fully benefit the entire
The potential for spill-over effects is likely greatest in the case of implementation agreements pertaining to international student exchange, dual or joint degree programs, and curriculum/instructional material where faculty, curricular, and budget resources are often interdependent across departments and colleges. Therefore, communication among potential stakeholders is critical to addressing any adverse effects while ensuring international partnerships are fully leveraged across the university. The following administrative units and governance groups play important roles in ensuring communication and in providing the necessary support for international agreements:

1. Academic Senate—to ensure our international engagements are enriching RIT’s academic reputation and quality, and to ensure they are consistent with University values and goals.
2. Provost and the Division of Academic Affairs—to ensure the senior administration are fully aware of RIT’s international engagement, and to ensure academic resources are efficiently used and programs are supported.
3. College Deans and Department Chairs/Directors—to ensure college resources are being used efficiently, and that college faculty and staff are able to support programs within a given college as well as those proposed by other colleges and departments across campus.
4. Division of Enrollment Management—to ensure international partnerships are leveraged to attract international students to RIT, and to ensure that RIT students participating in reciprocal agreements are properly supported by cooperative education and financial aid.
5. Budget/Controllers Office—to ensure international partnerships are financially viable and do not adversely impact RIT financially.
6. Associate Provost for Research—to ensure international research collaborations are fully leveraged and supported.
7. Study Abroad—to ensure student registration, student advising, and faculty support mechanisms are in place for international travel and study abroad agreements.
8. International Student Affairs—to ensure students from international partner institutions are properly supported and compliant with State Department registration and visa requirements.
9. Office of Legal Affairs—to ensure the contracts and agreements are legally substantiated and reviewed. All agreements outlined under this policy will either be developed by or formally reviewed by the Office of Legal Affairs.
10. Global Risk Management—to ensure the issues related to risk in international settings are being properly managed, and that risk exposure to RIT is minimized. All agreements involving the exchange of students, the exchange of faculty, international travel, and the hosting of foreign nationals in RIT facilities will be reviewed by Global Risk Management.

The process outlined herein ensures each unit/stakeholder is appropriately engaged and informed in the process of developing international agreements. The process assumes the Associate Provost for International Education and Global Programs will serve as the clearinghouse for communication with these units and groups.
The process for implementing an international MOU and/or a specific implementation agreement is initiated by filing an *International Agreement Description and Goal Statement (IAD)*. The IAD, available from the Associate Provost for International Education and Global Programs, serves to inform university stakeholders and key administrative support units of the intent to initiate an agreement with an international partner. It provides a brief statement of the goals of the partnership and initiates the drafting of the MOU and/or associated implementing agreements. All IAD’s are filed with the Associate Provost for International Education and Global Programs for approval by the Provost, the Senior Vice President for Enrollment Management, and the RIT Budget Office.

**For Faculty:** The faculty, through their scholarship, teaching, and outreach, will often act as catalysts for a potential partnership. In serving as the catalyst for these relationships, faculty are obligated to the partner institution, to their department chairs, deans, and the division of academic affairs to ensure their goals for a partnership are feasible and consistent with RIT policy and strategy. Thus, faculty may initiate discussion of a department and/or college level agreement by first securing written support from their department chair and Dean for their efforts with a specific international partner. Once the international partnership develops to a point where a formal agreement is needed, the faculty member should petition their Department Chair/Director to approve and file an IAD to initiate the drafting of an MOU and/or appropriate implementing agreements. A copy of the approved IAD is then filed by the Dean or Department Chair with the Associate Provost for International Education and Global Programs. The Associate Provost will collaborate with the college, participating faculty, and the office of legal affairs to develop the necessary agreements.

**Step #1:** Establish a clear statement of goals and objectives for the partnership in conjunction with the international partner(s)

**Step #2:** Secure a letters of support from the Department Chair and Dean to develop the international agreement.

**Step #3:** Contact the Associate Provost for International Education and Global Programs to develop the *International Agreement Description and Goal Statement (IAD)*.

**Step #4:** The Associate Provost for International Education and Global Programs works with the faculty member to draft an agreement.

**Step #5:** Final agreements and IAD are circulated for signatures by the Department Chair, Dean, Senior Executive Vice President for Enrollment Management, the Budget Office, and the Provost.

**For Department Chairs/Directors and Deans:** Department Chairs and Deans may initiate an international partnership, and have an obligation to the partner institution, to their faculty, and to colleagues in other colleges to ensure their goals for a partnership are feasible and consistent with RIT policy. Therefore, they too must receive a preliminary statement of support.

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1 The IAD will serve a function similar to the Proposal Routing Form (PRF) currently used by Sponsored Research Services for grant proposals.
Department Chairs would attain a preliminary statement of support from their Dean, and Dean’s would attain a preliminary statement of support from the Provost. Once the international partnership develops to a point where a formal agreement is needed, the Department Chair or Dean should petition their Dean, or the Provost, to approve an IAD. The approved IAD will initiate the drafting of an MOU and/or appropriate implementing agreements. A copy of the approved IAD will be filed by the Dean or Department Chair with the Associate Provost for International Education and Global Programs, who will collaborate with the college and participating faculty to develop the necessary agreements.

**Step #1:** Establish a clear statement of goals and objectives for the partnership in conjunction with the international partner(s)

**Step #2:** Secure a letters of support from the Dean and Provost to develop the international agreement.

**Step #3:** Contact the Associate Provost for International Education and Global Programs to develop the *International Agreement Description and Goal Statement (IAD)*.

**Step #4:** The Associate Provost for International Education and Global Programs works with the Department Chair/Dean to draft the agreement in conjunction with the relevant stakeholders.

**Step #5:** Final agreements and IAD are circulated for signatures by the Department Chair, Dean, Senior Executive Vice President for Enrollment Management, the Budget Office, and the Provost.

**Required Signatures on IAD**

For proposed Memorandums of Understanding

- Department Chair (for those initiated by faculty)
- Dean or equivalent
- Provost

For Implementing Agreements

- Department Chair (for agreements initiated by faculty)
- Dean or equivalent
- Senior Vice President for Enrollment Management and Career Services (for agreements involving international internships, co-ops, or tuition and financial aid decisions).
Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration (for agreements impacting RIT budgets at the university, college or department level)

Provost

All agreements are reviewed by legal affairs and risk management through a process coordinated by the Provost’s Office.

**Reporting and Accountability**

The Associate Provost for International Education and Global Programs will provide monthly reports to the Dean’s Council, the Global Education Council, and will provide an annual report to Academic Senate and Institute Council on the status and outcomes of international agreements.

**Attachments**

1. Sample International Agreement Description (IAD) (under development)

**Document Tracking**

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