

Office of the Provost guidelines for international academic articulations

Towson University's reputation in the international community depends in part on the nature and strength of its partnerships. Early attention to these issues helps everyone provide their input on the approval path.

An academic articulation requires a formal agreement between Towson University and an overseas institution. The agreements are usually labelled as 2+2, 3+2, 4+2, or 1+1 to distinguish what proportions of a program is each institution's responsibility. An articulation specifies what credit may be applied toward a Towson University degree from the overseas institution and may also establish specialized admission procedures. Articulation agreements should not include language that suggests guaranteed transfer or terms that could be construed as a payment to the overseas institution for providing admission to Towson University (e.g. tuition or fees to be paid to the institution during the student's time at Towson University).

Articulation agreements are developed after careful assessment of the institution's goals' compatibility, general fiscal feasibility, the host institution's seat capacity, anticipated benefits, and the impact on international enrollment management and student services.

The following process is established by the Office of the Provost to specify the protocol and steps required for the initiation and development of Towson University's academic articulation with international institutions.

Before discussing academic collaboration with a foreign institution, university staff/faculty should consider the following issues:

1. Institution suitability

The university will consider each proposed collaboration on its own merits. Providing background information about the proposed collaborating institution or organization will assist reviewers in making sound and consistent decisions. This is particularly important when a Towson University degree will be based on coursework completed at another institution. Useful information about the proposed collaborating institution or organization includes the following:

- Status of the institution as a degree or non-degree granting educational institution;
- Status as a government or private organization;
- Accreditation status or other academic recognition;
- Institutional size and areas of specialization;
- Ranking and other quality indicators;
- Existing international relationships.

The above information is ascertained through completion of [Towson University's International Academic Articulations Assessment form](#). Proposers must complete this form and secure the imprimatur of their

immediate supervisor/Department Chair(s) and college dean, whereupon it is sent to the Office of International Partnerships. Note that it is available for Towson University academic departments to review, and can be downloaded from the Office of the Provost website (or, preferably a secured location only accessible from internal sources).

2. Agreement sustainability

The institution should contribute time and resources to the development of an agreement if its sustainability is likely. Characteristics indicating sustainability include the following:

- Availability of faculty/staff/administrative resources required both at Towson University and at the collaborating institution;
- Support from the department chair and the sponsoring college dean,
- History of the relationship including:
 - Number and scope of reciprocal visits between the institutions;
 - Number of faculty members from both institutions involved in the collaboration;
 - Length of time that a relationship has existed;
 - Nature and scope of past or current cooperation;
 - Existence of prior joint projects, exchanges or agreements;

Before the renewal of any agreement, a regular review of the collaboration is recommended to assess its sustainability and success.

3. Justification and outcome

The potential partners should consider an agreement only when both parties will work towards an outcome-oriented collaboration that brings reasonable value to both institutions.

Towson University Strategic Plan (TU2020) declares that Towson University's primary goal is "Academic Excellence and Student Success." To achieve this the relationship should aim to "prepare globally conscious students for an expanding workforce." Additionally, relationships should "further strengthen [Towson University's] commitment to diversity" and continue our recognition as a "national model for diversity and closing the achievement gap."

Additionally, proposers should consider collaborative programs with a strategy that promotes focusing on fewer and more strategic universities partnerships. Within this context, proposers should consider the academic unit's mission, long-range strategic planning, and potential for disciplinary synergy. More specifically the proposers should consider the following questions:

- What resources are required for the collaboration?
- Does the partner institution or program provide curricular assets not otherwise available?
- Is there a curricular need and market demand for the planned program and what evidence supports and assertion of this need?
- How many students/faculty members would participate in the program?
- Does the collaboration require a formal agreement?
- Which of the [TU2020 Strategic Plan](#) priorities and/or [Presidential Priorities](#) does the collaboration support or enhance and how does it do so?

4. Compliance

Accreditation

Certain types of collaboration require approval by the institution's regional accreditor, especially so where they involve the delivery of Towson University curriculum at a site other than the home campus. If the collaboration involves the delivery of Towson University curriculum overseas, whether by Towson University faculty or not, the proposal originator should consult with the Director of Accreditation and Compliance services wforsythe@towson.edu, 410-704-3312.

Health and safety, security, and ethics

Certain types of collaborative relationships, research activities, and country affiliations may be restricted or limited by law or policy despite promising academic possibilities. As a United States institution, Towson University is required to comply with the laws and regulations issued by the government related to the export of both goods and services. The U.S. government controls the export of certain technologies, software and hardware for reasons of national security, foreign policy, prevention of the spread of weapons of mass destruction and for competitive trade reasons. Export control laws regulate the transfer of items, technology, software and services. They apply to all activities with foreign persons and foreign countries, not just sponsored research projects and not just activities which involve the transfer of technology or information to a foreign destination. Export controls may restrict: (1) the ability of foreign nationals (students, researchers or collaborators) to participate in research; (2) the ability of University personnel to provide services (including training in the use of equipment) to foreign nationals; (3) the ability to send equipment, spare/replacement parts, technology or software to foreign countries; (4) and the ability to collaborate with researchers in foreign countries.

Every Towson University employee is expected to be aware of the export control issues related to their work and to use the available resources to ensure compliance. If you have questions, advice is available through the Towson University Office of Sponsored Programs and Research at ospr@towson.edu or 410-704-2236.

5. Agreements process: general overview

- Collaborations are typically initiated by Towson University faculty departments and staff members. Both the department Chair(s) and Dean(s) or unit supervisor must approve the collaboration before the Office of International Partnerships can start the university-wide agreement review process. Departments and Colleges are responsible for implementing the agreement in accordance with Towson University policies and applicable laws.
- The Office of International Partnerships will coordinate the review of all international collaboration agreements with the applicable units at Towson University. Once approvals are secured, the Office of International Partnerships will coordinate the signing process.
- The Office of International Partnerships has a variety of agreement templates which are updated regularly. **Users are strongly encouraged to use only templates provided by the Office of International Partnerships.** The use of out-of-date Towson University templates or non-Towson University templates will significantly prolong the review process.

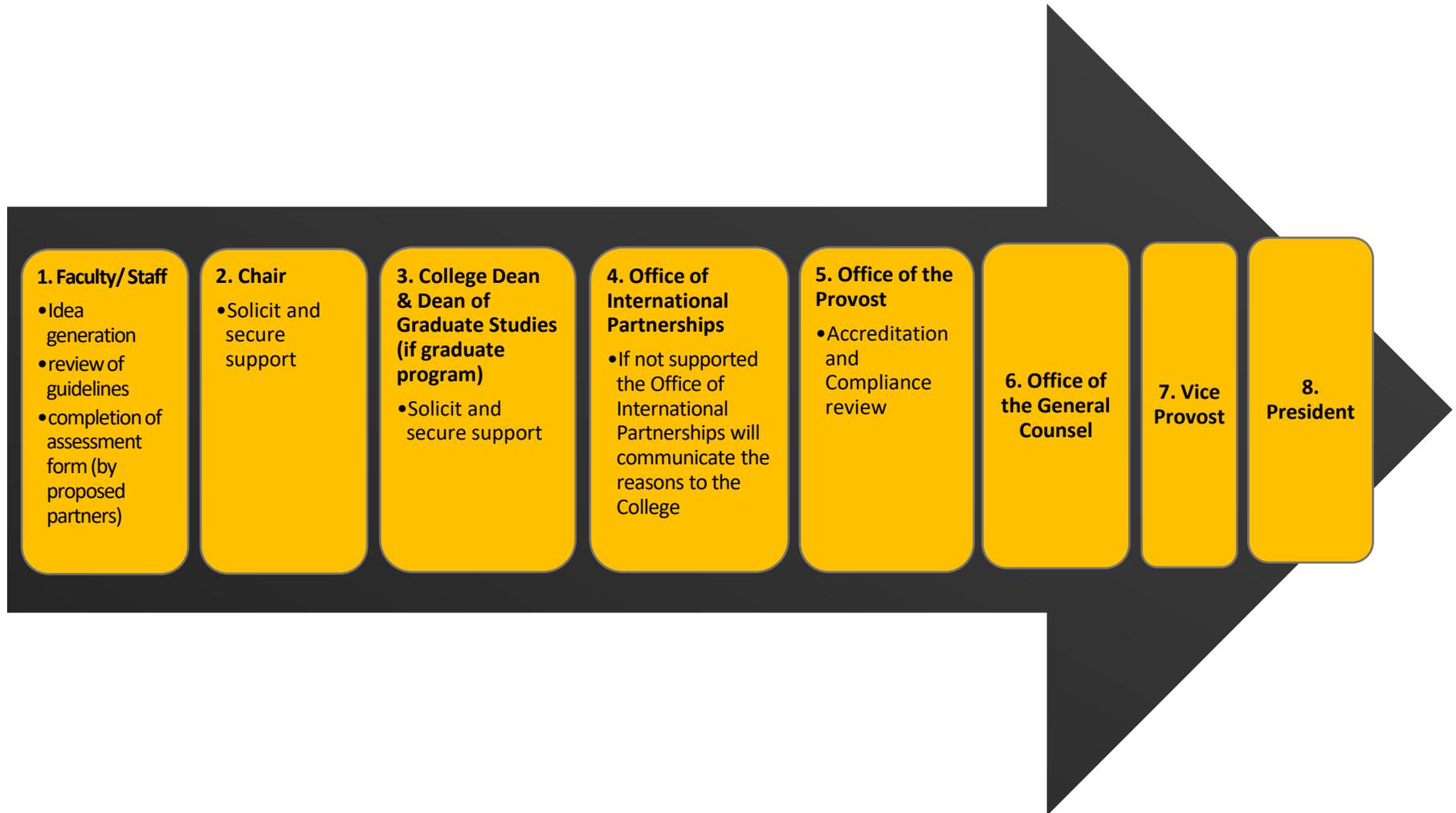
- **Deadlines and expedited agreements:** If there is a deadline for the agreement (for example, a planned signing ceremony), the proposer should notify the Office of International Partnerships of that deadline as soon as possible. In general, the Office of International Partnerships will not expedite a signing unless there is a strong justification. For example, all parties and relevant offices at Towson University have vetted and supported the agreement well in advance and/or the agreement involves a strategic partner with whom there is a longstanding relationship.

6. Signing guidelines and procedures

- The Office of International Partnerships will coordinate the process of receiving appropriate signatures. The Office of International Partnerships will generally print the agreed upon number of agreements on parchment paper and send them to the appropriate signatories at Towson University and to the institution abroad. The collection of Towson University signatures may take several weeks, depending on signatory availability.
- **Number of originals:** for every agreement, at least two (2) fully signed originals are required, one for Towson University and one for the collaborating institution. Towson University will generally request one (1) original which must be filed with Office of International Partnerships. The Office of International Partnerships maintains a database of all international collaboration agreements for the University. Colleges will receive a scanned copy of the signed agreement.
- **Signatories:** Under Towson University policy, the President must sign articulation agreements. Additionally, the Dean of Graduate Studies will review Memoranda of Articulation that establish collaborative graduate programs and/or exchanges. The college dean, Office of the General Council, Director of Accreditation and Compliance, and the Vice-Provost will review agreements involving academic units.

Process of Academic Articulation Proposal Review

International articulations consideration and approval workflow



Step 1: Initiating the idea for academic articulation

- The Towson University faculty or staff member initiating the idea of an academic articulation with an overseas institution must review these academic articulation guidelines, and complete the assessment/evaluation in partnership with the institution with whom they are proposing the agreement solicit and secure their department's chair/supervisor's support.
- The proposals progenitor must identify course equivalencies in facilitating any agreements and
- Secure their supervisor's support for the endeavor.

Step 2: Chair/Dean/Supervisor approval

The Dean(s) must carefully review the proposed articulation considering the evaluation criteria and requirements outlined in these guidelines and the information provided in the assessment/evaluation form. If the supervisor supports the proposal they should forward to the Dean's Office for its review. Graduate articulation proposals should also solicit and secure the Dean of Graduate Studies support. If the Dean(s) supports the proposal they should send it to the Office of International Partnerships (OIP) who will facilitate the proposal's subsequent consideration and vetting, and the signing of any supported articulation agreement; additionally, the OIP and conveying the reasons for not supporting proposals that do not receive approval.

Step 3: Office of International Partnerships develops a draft MOU

The Office of International Partnerships will review the agreement request and consult with other Towson University units as necessary. This will include the development of a general memorandum of understanding to support initiatives under that memorandum. If the partner institution provides a draft agreement, then the college designee will provide the Office of International Partnerships with that draft. The Office of International Partnerships will review the draft, coordinate the internal Towson University evaluation process, and provide the college designee with any approved version. (NOTE: It is strongly recommended that Towson University drafts be used in order to ensure a quicker turnaround.)

Step 4: Office of International Partnerships

If approved, the Office of International Partnerships develops and sends a draft articulation agreement to the college designee. Any articulation agreement must include a curriculum map demonstrating course equivalencies.

Step 5: Office of International Partnerships communicates with the partner institution to finalize the agreement

The OIP shares the Towson University draft with the collaborating institution, and obtains the names and titles of all signatories for the collaborating institution. (NOTE: Partner signatures are NOT obtained at this stage. Office of International Partnerships will obtain ALL necessary signatures.) Any request by the collaborating institution to amend the terms of the agreements requires the Office of International Partnerships review. Proposers should remind the

collaborating institution that formal Towson University approval is required to sign and prosecute the agreement.

Step 6: Compliance

- A. The Director of Accreditation and Compliance will review the proposal for any accreditation implications and/or other regulatory requirements and considerations.
- B. The Office of International Partnerships coordinates all legal matters with the Towson University Office of the General Counsel and sends the final version of the draft agreement to Towson University Office of the General Counsel for approval.
- C. The Office of International Partnerships coordinates checks and clearances (signatories and main contacts) against key U.S. government lists in conjunction with the Office of Sponsored Programs & Research (OSPR).

Step 7: Agreement confirmation and signing ceremony

The Office of International Partnerships coordinates the final Towson University approval and signing, including the agreed upon number of agreements on parchment paper and coordinates the signing process both internally and externally with the partner institution. The Office of International Partnerships keeps one original version on file in an agreements database for university reporting.