
Partnerships Procedure

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| Policy Sponsor: | Vice-President Advancement |
| Name of Parent Policy: | Partnerships Policy |
| Policy Contact: | Director, Partnerships and Student Recruitment |
| Procedure Contact: | Director, Partnerships and Student Recruitment |
| Effective Date of Procedures: | January 12, 2017 |
| Review Date: | To be reviewed biennially |

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to establish a process by which university faculty and staff members may propose the exploration of partnerships with external entities and participate in the negotiation and implementation of formal agreements leading to the creation of such partnerships.

This procedure applies to the formation of partnerships with domestic or international external entities when Athabasca University resources are required to support the partnership. This procedure does not apply to

- research funding agreements
- recognition of undergraduate transfer credit
- recognition of graduate transfer credit
- clinical placements
- student academic and research arrangements
- the formation of legal partnerships or other legal entities governed by the *Creation of a Legal Entity Policy*
- sponsorships
- solicitation or acceptance of donations
- applications to granting programs or acceptance of grants



Definitions

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| Champion | A university employee who initiates discussion of and proposes a prospective partnership. |
| Contract Manager | An employee who has been delegated authority by the university to oversee the implementation of a partnership on behalf of the university. A champion may serve as a contract manager. |
| Due Diligence Report | A report prepared during the assessment of a proposed partnership, assessing the viability and value of the proposed activities and the capacity of internal and external parties to carry out the proposed activities. |
| External Entity | A legally constituted independent body or agency (private, public or not-for profit) operating separately from Athabasca University. |
| Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) | A signed official document recording the details of a partnership agreement between the university and one or more external entities, one which creates obligations between or among the signatories. An MOA may impose financial obligations on one or more of the signatories. |
| Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) | A signed official document recording the details of a partnership agreement between the university and one or more external entities, one that is not intended to create obligations among the signatories. An MOU establishes a general framework for the partnership between or among the signatories and establishes general goals for the partnership. |
| Monitoring and Evaluation Processes | Processes established to measure the success of a partnership in terms of the purpose and goals stated in the agreement by which it was established. |
| Partnership | A co-operative arrangement through which the university and one or more external entities work jointly toward realization of a common goal or set of goals and which requires a commitment of resources by both the university and the other entity or entities involved. |
| Risk Assessment Report | A report prepared during the assessment of a proposed partnership, identifying and assessing the risks, if any, associated with entering into an agreement with the external entity or entities in question and examining the degree to which identified risks can be mitigated. |



Term The interval between the start date and the end date of an MOA or MOU.

Responsibility

The Partnerships and Student Recruitment Unit of the Advancement Office provides support and expertise across the university in the development and implementation of partnerships. Champions of partnership opportunities will contact the Director, Partnerships and Student Recruitment to access support and submit proposals.

Timelines

The length of time required to review and approve a partnership proposal and to negotiate and prepare a partnership agreement varies significantly, depending on the complexity of the proposed partnership. Champions of proposed partnerships should contact Partnerships and Student Recruitment well in advance of any contemplated start dates or performance deadlines, allowing an appropriate length of time for development and approval of the particular agreement that they are championing. Partnerships and Student Recruitment can provide assistance in estimating the probable length of time required.

Partnership Procedure

1. Notice of partnership opportunity

The champion will first discuss a prospective partnership opportunity with the appropriate dean(s) or director(s), who will in turn inform and consult with the appropriate vice-president(s). The champion will then advise Partnerships and Student Recruitment of the partnership opportunity. The Director of Partnerships and Student Recruitment will ensure that all appropriate deans, directors and vice-presidents have been informed of the prospective partnership opportunity before proceeding to Step 2 below.

2. Preparation of partnership proposal

Champions of a partnership opportunity should use the partnership proposal template available at <http://intra.athabasca.ca/depts/advancement/index.php> in developing a written partnership proposal.

Partnerships and Student Recruitment will provide guidance or information with respect to

- navigating the internal approval process
- best practices in structuring a partnership (when applicable)
- successful past partnerships with external entities similar to the external entity or entities to be involved in the proposed partnership



3. Assessment of proposed partnership

Partnerships and Student Recruitment will complete a due diligence report for all proposed partnerships, whether the arrangement is to be formalized by an MOU or an MOA. In addition, Partnerships and Student Recruitment will complete a risk assessment report for proposed partnerships that are to be formalized by an MOA. A due diligence report and a risk assessment report templates are available at <http://intra.athabascau.ca/depts/advancement/index.php>. Champions may be required to provide information or assist in obtaining information needed to complete these reports.

4. Approval process

- a. Dean, Director and Vice-President Consultations: Working with the champion, Partnerships and Student Recruitment will submit the partnership proposal, along with the due diligence report and the risk assessment report (if required), to the appropriate dean(s), director(s) and vice-president(s) for information and approval to proceed. At the discretion of a vice-president, the proposal and supporting reports may, for any reason, be referred to Executive Group for information or approval.

Approval by Executive Group is required if the proposed partnership

- involves waivers or reductions of university fees
- poses a risk of unfavourable media attention or political controversy
- poses other substantial risks to or places significant burdens on the university
- is deemed by a vice-president to fall outside the scope of the Strategic University Plan or the Comprehensive Institutional Plan

If approval to proceed is granted, the champion will advance to the internal stakeholder consultation and negotiation steps (b. below). If approval to proceed is not granted, the champion will advise the external entity or entities involved in the proposed partnership of that decision.

- b. Internal Stakeholder Consultations and Negotiations: The champion will consult with internal stakeholders whose resources will be needed to implement the terms and conditions of the proposed partnership. If the champion is unable to achieve agreement on allocation of needed resources with internal stakeholders, he or she may refer obstacles to such agreement to the appropriate dean(s), director(s) and vice-president(s) for consideration. Only when agreement on allocation of internal resources is achieved will the champion proceed to external consultations and negotiations (c. below).
- c. External Consultations and Negotiations: The champion may assemble a team to assist with consultations and negotiations with the external entity or entities to be



involved in the proposed partnership. This team may include

- the champion
- appropriate dean(s), director(s) or vice-president(s)
- the Director of Partnerships and Student Recruitment (or a delegate)
- other internal stakeholders

If consultations and negotiations are successful, the proposed partnership will advance to the agreement development phase (Step 5 below). If consultations and negotiations are unsuccessful, the champion will inform Partnerships and Student Recruitment in writing of that outcome, and Partnerships and Student Recruitment will formally advise the appropriate dean(s), director(s) and vice-president(s) and Executive Group (if it has been previously consulted) that negotiations with respect to the partnership opportunity have been terminated without an agreement.

5. Agreement development (drafting)

Partnerships and Student Recruitment will enter the partnership in AU's Contract System (AUCTS).

Procurement and Contract Services will develop a partnership agreement (MOU or MOA) in collaboration with Partnerships and Student Recruitment, the champion and the external entity or entities to be involved in the partnership.

Partnerships and Student Recruitment will ensure that the following parties have an opportunity to review the final draft of the partnership agreement before it is signed:

- the champion
- the appropriate dean(s) director(s) and vice-president(s)
- Executive Group, if necessary (See 4a. above)
- the prospective partner

6. Signing and filing of the agreement

Procurement and Contract Services will co-ordinate the signing of the agreement (MOU or MOA) by the university and all external entities involved. In accordance with the AU's *Contract Administration Procedure*, the president will sign all agreements on behalf of the university.

The university will retain a signed copy of the agreement in AU's Contract System.

7. Implementation

A designated contract manager will be responsible for implementing and managing the partnership on behalf of the university. The champion who proposed the



partnership may serve as contract manager.

8. Monitoring and Reporting

- a. MOU or MOA Monitoring: The contract manager will submit an annual monitoring report, based on the goals and terms and conditions of the partnership agreement, to the appropriate dean(s), director(s) and vice-president(s) and to the director of the Partnerships and Student Recruitment. The Director of Partnerships and Student Recruitment will review the report in consultation with the appropriate dean or director.
- b. MOA Evaluation: If the partnership agreement is formalized by way of an MOA, the champion will submit an evaluation report to the appropriate dean(s), director(s) and vice-president(s) approximately six months before the end of the term of the MOA. The report will detail the outcomes of the partnership and indicate whether the initiative is completed, requires an extension or must be re-negotiated and renewed.
- c. Report to the President: Partnerships and Student Recruitment will, through the Vice-President Advancement, present an annual information report to the President on the status of all partnership agreements, including an update on partnerships in progress and under consideration.
- d. Filing of Reports: All monitoring and evaluation reports will be filed in the university's contract system.
- e. Report templates: Monitoring and evaluation report templates are available at <http://intra.athabascau.ca/depts/advancement/index.php>.

7. File Maintenance

Procurement and Contract Services is responsible for the maintenance of the university's contract system and for ensuring that maintenance and management of documents are in accordance with the requirements of the Auditor General of Alberta.

Applicable Legislation and Regulations

Canada's Anti-Spam Law (CASL)

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (Alberta)

Related References, Policies, Procedures and Forms

[*Approval of Non-Collegiate Organization Policy*](#)

[*Approval of Non-Collegiate Organization Procedure*](#)

[*Conflict of Interest Policy*](#)



[Contract Administration Policy](#)
[Contract Administration Procedure](#)
[Creation of Legal Entity Policy](#)
[Creation of Legal Entity Procedure](#)
[Delegation of Expenditure Approval Authority Policy](#)
[Delegation of Expenditure Approval Authority Procedures](#)
[Enterprise Risk Management Policy](#)
[Graduate Transfer Credit Policy](#)
[Undergraduate Transfer Credit Policy](#)
[Partnership Policy](#)
[Purchasing Policy](#)
[Non-credit Courses and Activities Policy](#)
[Sponsorship, Donation and Non-Employee Gift Expenditure Policy](#)

History

Governors of Athabasca University, January 12, 2017, Motion # 221-06 (associated policy approved)