

## **International Dual or Sequential Degrees:**

### **Guidelines for Establishing a Dual or Sequential Degree Program between University of Wisconsin-Madison and a Foreign Institution**

(Adopted by the University Academic Planning Council, May 19, 2011)

#### **Introduction and Overview**

This document was developed for the purpose of providing faculty and staff with guidelines for the approval, modification, and review of sequential and dual degree programs between UW-Madison and a university in another country<sup>1</sup>. The document also provides guidelines for curriculum and governance structures, suggests standards for admission, continuation, and completion for each program, and offers possible models for these sequential and dual degree programs. Thus, these guidelines are designed to reduce barriers to develop such collaborations.

There are many modes of collaboration with international universities. Faculty, staff, and administrators who are planning collaborations should consult the companion document “Modes of International Academic Program and Course Collaborations” for details and information about accessing policies that pertain to those approaches.

Some collaborations with international universities do not require the full approval process. For example, a “Letter of Agreement” may be sufficient in some cases, especially when collaborations revolve around a single student or arrangements between faculty members rather than between programs. See the section below entitled “Is a sequential or dual degree agreement necessary?”

Sequential and dual degrees are defined in Table 1. Sequential and dual degrees are most useful for graduate and professional programs. For undergraduate programs, other mechanisms are typically more appropriate (transfer of credit and undergraduate admission, study abroad, and student exchange programs).

Proposals for sequential or dual degree programs will be considered only for programs in robust academic health. If the UW-Madison program was recently established, it must have passed the joint review stage before being eligible. The program should have been reviewed within the past 10 years, have active processes for curricular and program revision, have an active assessment program, and be in good standing with any specialized accreditation agency if relevant. Programs that have outstanding academic issues or that are low-enrollment are not candidates for sequential or dual degree arrangements.

Sequential and dual degree arrangements can be resource intensive and departments will need to be prepared to provide the additional support for students in the program.

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<sup>1</sup> This document was modeled after a similar set of guidelines produced by Texas A&M, <http://intlcenter.tamu.edu/MemoJointDualGuidelines.asp> .

Students in a sequential and dual degree programs will apply to, be admitted to, and enroll in a formal, named option associated with the degree program. Thus, a component of the approval process will be to request approval for a formal, named option. Academic program review for sequential/dual degree programs will be conducted on a five-year cycle.

As described in Table 1, new modes of collaboration will, in general, require approval from groups referred to as “program faculty.” The nature of “program faculty” varies widely among different academic programs, in some instances including all of the faculty members in a department, in other instances the Executive Committee of a department, in yet other instances, a subset of faculty in a department, or faculty from more than one department. Consequently, defining the nature of approvals required to demonstrate agreement of “program faculty” will require exploration and consultation. (Consult Faculty Policies and Procedures for more information about faculty roles and responsibilities.)

**Table 1. Definitions and Key Features of Sequential and Dual Degrees**

<p>Sequential Degrees</p>	<p>Formalized arrangement in which students earn a specified degree at a partner institution and then apply to, enroll in, and complete a second, related program at UW-Madison. Courses from the first program may be used to waive requirements in the UW-Madison program. Students will still be required to meet all UW-Madison program and degree requirements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students apply to the UW-Madison program, enroll, and make progress to degree as UW-Madison students. Program admission requirements may require that the student has completed the first degree in the sequence at the partner institution.</li> <li>• For systematic sequential degree partnerships in which all students are labeled as participating in an identifiable program, this approach requires approval by the program faculty, school/college dean, institutional governance, provost, and chancellor. System or Regent approval and other approvals may be required in some circumstances.</li> <li>• As long as all UW-Madison admission and program/degree requirements are met and the program faculty maintain control of the curriculum and program requirements, then no academic approvals are required by external agencies such as the Higher Learning Commission (HLC).</li> <li>• In addition to academic approvals, an MOU for signature by the partner institutions and other governing groups is also required.</li> </ul>
<p>Dual Degree</p>	<p>Formalized arrangement in which students complete the requirements for two degrees from two institutions, with efficiencies in course taking. Each institution is primarily responsible for its own degree.</p> <p>(Use dual degrees for graduate and professional programs. For undergraduate programs, use Transfer of Credit or Study Away or Student Exchange mechanisms)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students apply to UW-Madison, enroll in the UW-Madison program, and make progress to degree as UW-Madison students.</li> <li>• Program requirements will specify any conditions for admission to the UW-Madison program associated with completing specific elements of the partner program prior to admission or in tandem with enrollment in good standing at UW-Madison.</li> <li>• For systematic dual degree programs in which a specific partnership is established and participating students are to be identified, then approval is required by program faculty, school/college dean, institutional governance groups such as the Graduate Faculty Executive Committee (GFEC) and the University Academic Planning Council (UAPC), the provost and chancellor.</li> <li>• If the dual degree program makes use of an existing UW-Madison program authorization, and if all UW-Madison program/degree requirements are met, and the program faculty maintain control of the curriculum and program requirements, then approvals by external agencies such as HLC may not be required.</li> <li>• These programs must be reported to UW System Administration, the Board of Regents, the Higher Learning Commission and other external agencies so institutional approvals and tracking are <i>required</i>. If the dual degree is developed as a new program, then the process for new program approval is followed.</li> <li>• Care must be taken to maintain a “home institution” model in which the faculty and governance responsibility for the UW-Madison program remains with UW-Madison.</li> <li>• In addition to academic approvals, an MOU between the partner institutions signed by a representative with signature authority is also required.</li> </ul>

## **Is a sequential or dual degree agreement necessary?**

Formal agreements for sequential or dual degrees are necessary when a program seeks an arrangement that will result in a regular, predictable flow of students through a program that meets the characteristics of a sequential or dual degree program.

If a faculty member wants to formalize a collaboration with a faculty member at a university in another country for a single student, or if two programs want to formalize a collaboration but expect that there is unlikely to be more than one student at a time involved in the collaboration, then a “Letter of Agreement” may be sufficient. A “Letter of Agreement” would be a letter that describes the details of the arrangement, including the scope and limits of the agreement. The faculty member would work with the department chair and the school/college dean to prepare the “Letter of Agreement”. The signatory authority is typically the school/college dean or the department chair. Faculty should consult with Cynthia Williams ([cwilliams@wisc.edu](mailto:cwilliams@wisc.edu)), International Studies and Programs, and Jocelyn Milner ([jmilner@wisc.edu](mailto:jmilner@wisc.edu)), Academic Planning and Analysis/Provost’s Office for institutional review of a Letter of Agreement.

A letter of agreement is not a contract. If a contract is required, consult Cynthia Williams ([cwilliams@wisc.edu](mailto:cwilliams@wisc.edu)), International Studies and Programs.

A fundamental assumption of dual and sequential degrees is that participating UW-Madison students meet the requirements of the existing UW-Madison degree. If faculty and staff seek to develop a program that is structured in a way that requirements would differ from existing requirements, then the proposal should be developed under guidelines for new academic programs ([apa.wisc.edu/approvals.html](http://apa.wisc.edu/approvals.html)). Consult Jocelyn Milner, [jmilner@wisc.edu](mailto:jmilner@wisc.edu), Academic Planning and Analysis/Provost’s Office.

## **Process to create a sequential or dual degree program with a foreign institution**

There are three steps in the process to create sequential or dual degree partnership with a foreign institution: 1. the “Letter of Cooperation”; 2. the proposal for the sequential or dual degree, including the proposal for a named option to be associated with an existing UW-Madison program; and 3. the Memo of Understanding.

### Step 1: Letter of Cooperation (LOC)<sup>2</sup>

The Letter of Cooperation signals an informal understanding between the partner programs and universities to develop a sequential or dual degree agreement. A sample LOC is appended. It is not a binding agreement. The LOC is optional: if circumstances allow, the program faculty may skip this step and go directly to Step 2, the development of the full proposal. The LOC is recommended as a useful step to help in planning and is useful if a timely action is required.

On occasion a document may need to be signed quickly or at a signing ceremony, and the LOC may fill this role.

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<sup>2</sup> Jocelyn Milner, director of Academic Planning and Analysis, and Cynthia Williams, division of International Studies, will assist program faculty in preparation and routing of the LOC, development of the proposal, and the MOU.

The LOC ensures that departments and their deans have discussed the new relationship and are willing to invest the time, energy, and financial resources needed to map out the details of these programs, gain formal approval, and eventually implement the program. The LOC is established for a defined period of time between one (1) and three (3) years. The duration, not to exceed three years, is specified. A Justification Statement must be attached to the LOC. At this early stage in the planning process, the program faculty need to use the Justification Statement to articulate explicitly the benefits to UW-Madison of such a partnership, how it aligns with strategic priorities and advances the mission of the University. Because sequential and dual degrees require a substantial administrative effort, they should be “worth it” and the onus is on the program faculty to make that case.

The LOC goes to the program or departmental faculty for a formal vote. After program or departmental approval, the school/college dean will give approval. The dean may choose to consult with the school/college Academic Planning Council. Written concurrence by the dean of the Graduate School, the dean of International Studies, the vice-chancellor for administration, and the provost signals that they are aware of plans to develop a full proposal. Final approval is given by the chancellor, who signs the LOC.

Because of the potential need for timeliness and the non-binding nature of the LOC, the LOC will be provided to the Graduate Faculty Executive Committee (GFEC) and University Academic Planning Council (UAPC) for information at the earliest opportunity, but approval of the LOC by these governance bodies is not required.

#### Step 2: Proposal for a Sequential or Dual Degree Program, including a Proposal for a Formal Named Option

A document that describes all of the elements of the proposed program must be prepared by the UW-Madison program faculty and staff. This description of the dual degree program must be formally endorsed by authorities at both institutions. Approvals will be required by all appropriate entities, including those on-campus, and if necessary those off-campus (UW System Administration, Board of Regents, Higher Learning Commission, parallel agencies associated with the foreign university).

The proposal is approved by the UW-Madison program faculty and the school/college (usually via the Academic Planning Council and dean’s office). The proposal is transmitted to the dean of the Graduate School (graduate programs) and the provost (all programs). After administrative review, the proposal will be considered by the Graduate Faculty Executive Committee (for graduate programs) and the University Academic Planning Council (all programs). Final approval is given by the dean of International Studies, the provost and the chancellor. The sequential or dual degree program is reported to UW System Administration.

At this time, UW System Administration (UWSA) does not have guidelines for sequential or dual degree program approval. The guidelines laid out in this document are subject to change if UWSA establishes over-riding requirements.

The proposal for a sequential/dual degree and a formal, named option should include the following information (10 page maximum for the body of the proposal, plus appendices and statements of endorsement):

- A copy of the LOC that has been signed by both the UW-Madison chancellor and the agents of the partner institution, if relevant.

- Motivation and rationale for the program, including a compelling case for advancing the strategic directions of UW-Madison. The case made in the LOC would be repeated here in such a way to reflect any evolution in thinking associated with the planning process
- Program goals and expectations for student learning. Discuss how students will benefit from the sequential or dual degree partnership in a way that they do not from the UW-Madison program.
- Admission requirements and any information related to the admissions process.
- Any details about program design, for example if the program will operate in a cohort model, details about when the students would be enrolled at UW-Madison and at the partner institution.
- Details of the curricular design, what requirements will be met at each institution and how it will apply to degree requirements at UW-Madison, and how all of the UW-Madison degree requirements will be met. What are limits on overlap?
- Plans for language training and specification of the language of instruction at the partner institution, if applicable.
- Description of how students' progress to degree will be monitored and verified, and any framework for assuring timely progress, and consequences for non-compliance.
- Plans for assessment of student learning (use existing assessment plan or revise for this program), and plans for program review and evaluation of program effectiveness. Program review is required every five years.
- Evidence of the ability of the partner institution to deliver an educational experience that meets the standards of UW-Madison.
- A list of other dual or sequential degree programs that the partner university has with like programs.
- A list of other dual or sequential degree programs that the UW-Madison program has with other universities.
- Description of conditions under which the partnership will be dissolved.
- Specification of administrative arrangements including application, admission, and registration logistics.
- Details related to financial support, financial aid, assistantships, or fellowship, including any special eligibility or exclusion rules.
- Design of program governance structure and how it relates to established governance structures (departments, school/college, etc) at UW-Madison. What will be the structure of the executive committee and how will the officers be identified. What are the criteria for "program faculty" and how will they be selected, identified. What are the criteria for UW-Madison faculty? For faculty at the partner institution? Specification for level of involvement of partner institution faculty in governance of the UW-Madison program.
- Fiscal implications, including how additional service costs will be supported and any requirements for special tuition. Any special tuition or financial requirements will need separate approvals through the relevant Dean's Office, the Vice Chancellor for Administration, and if necessary UW System Administration and the Board of Regents.
- Risk management implications and plans for student services and support for UW-Madison students while they are at the partner institution (not required for sequential degrees). Refer to the report of the University Travel Committee (2010) and Travel Guidelines for UW-Madison Faculty, Staff, and Students [these guidelines are being developed].

- Explanation of the approval process required at the partner institution, including specification of approvals required by accreditation and governmental agencies in the country of the partner institution.
- A final draft of the MOU (Step 3).

### Step 3: Completion of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

When steps 1 and 2 are complete, the MOU can be formally signed, usually by the Chancellor. The MOU will usually have elements that signal agreements between UW-Madison and the partner institution, and a specific program agreement.

A standard format for the MOU is attached.

After the academic approvals, the program faculty make any final changes needed to the MOU. The full proposal, notice of governance and provost approval is routed widely, including to the Office of International Studies<sup>3</sup>, the MOU is reviewed one last time, revised if needed, and forwarded to the chancellor and other agents for final signature.

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<sup>3</sup> Cynthia Williams, International Studies and Programs

**LETTER OF COOPERATION**  
**Dual/Sequential Degree Program**

[Date]

[Individual @ Foreign Institution]

[Address]

Reference: Cooperation Between [Foreign Institution] and University of Wisconsin-Madison

Dear [Individual]:

[Foreign] and University of Wisconsin-Madison recognize that cooperating would be of mutual benefit and would serve as an indication of continued interest in collaborative activities. We agree that the universities will explore:

1. The development of a sequential/dual degree program,
2. The identification of individuals who will develop a detailed plan for the sequential/dual degree program,
3. Avenues for strengthening their relationship and furthering excellence in United States and [foreign country] education, and
4. Prior to offering the sequential/dual degree program, the institutions will develop an official Memorandum of Understanding.

This Letter of Cooperation will become effective on the final date of signing and will endure for [one/two/three] year[s] from the date of execution specified below.

**University of Wisconsin-Madison**

**[Foreign University]**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

[Name]

[Name]

[Title, usually dean]

[Title]

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Carolyn "Biddy" Martin

[name]

Chancellor

[Chancellor/President]

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Attachment: Justification Statement



# JUSTIFICATION STATEMENT FOR SEQUENTIAL/DUAL DEGREE PROGRAM

Between

Program, Department, College, University of Wisconsin-Madison

And

Program, Department, College, [Foreign University]

## ***Background:***

- History of relationship to this point with faculty, department and institution
- What other institution contributes (i.e. expertise, research sites, labs...)

## ***Area of Cooperation:***

- What you hope to accomplish with this relationship

## ***Other Considerations:***

- No other institution doing this type of research
- Worked with this individual...

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## ***Notes:***

*Attach Justification Statement to the LOC and to the Program Proposal*

*Keep justification to 1-2 pages in length*

**TRANSMITTAL FORM  
FOR LETTER OF COOPERATION (LOC) AND JUSTIFICATION STATEMENT  
SEQUENTIAL/DUAL DEGREE PROGRAMS**

Lead UW-Madison Faculty Member

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Program \_\_\_\_\_  
Department \_\_\_\_\_

Approval by Program Faculty, Authorized by Program/Department Chair

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Approval by School/College Dean or Designee

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Concurrence of Dean of the Graduate School or Designee (only for graduate programs)

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Concurrence of Dean of International Studies

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Concurrence of Vice Chancellor - Administration

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Concurrence of Provost

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

**When all signatures are complete, the LOC is sent to Cynthia Williams (copy to Jocelyn Milner) who will arrange for Chancellor's signature.**

# MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

## Sequential/Dual Degree Program

Between

**[Foreign University Name]**

[City, State/Province]

[Country]

And

**University of Wisconsin-Madison**

Madison, Wisconsin

United States of America

The above named institutions recognize that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) providing for a sequential/dual degree program would be of mutual benefit for [program name] at UW-Madison and [program name] at [foreign university].

### Program Summary

1.01 The institutions agree to cooperate in offering a sequential/dual degree program in [field of study/degree level] as described in the full proposal (Exhibit 1) attached to this MOU.

1.01 The institutions will identify faculty for participation in this program for joint teaching and/or research.

### Students

2.01 Each professional or graduate student involved in these programs will be subject to the admission requirements and tuition and fees of the institution at which they are enrolled. Partner institutions may recommend students for admission to each other's programs, but the enrolling institution shall make final admission decisions.

2.02 Language competency must be at a level that will allow participating students to attend classes in the language of institution. At UW-Madison the language of instruction is English. For graduate students enrolling at UW-Madison, GRE, GMAT or equivalent scores are required. ESL REQUIREMENT.

2.03 Students will be responsible for their own transportation and for housing, insurance, and other costs of daily living, unless otherwise stipulated.

2.04 Programs may have resources to provide to support students in terms of scholarships, assistance-ships, or other financial assistance.

2.05 All United States federal financial aid for UW-Madison students will be distributed solely by UW-Madison. US federal financial aid is not available to international students. Both institutions will make the estimated cost of attendance available to student participants, including estimates for tuition, required fees, books, room and board, transportation and other personal expenses.

2.06 Participating students will be subject to the rules and regulations of the institution at which they are enrolled. Any breach of these rules will be dealt with in accordance with the host institution's disciplinary policy.

2.07 Rules and regulations governing international students in the US and in [country] will apply to students in the sequential/dual degree program.

### **Term**

3.01 This MOU will become effective on the final date of signing and will have a duration of [not more than five] years.

3.02 This MOU may be terminated by either university by providing 180 days written notice to the Coordinators listed below.

### **Designation of Coordinators**

4.01 Each party designates the following individuals to serve as Coordinators under this MOU. The individuals designated as Coordinators may be revised by either party by providing written notice to the current Coordinators.

UW-Madison – the dean of International Studies and Programs, or dean's designee  
[Foreign University] – provost/vice-president for academic affairs, or equivalent, or designee

### **General**

5.01 Expenses incurred by each university under this MOU will be the sole responsibility of the departments of the institution and all activities will be dependent upon budgetary appropriations of the institutions.

5.02 Each university agrees to comply with the host country's immigration guidelines in support of exchanges of international students and/or faculty.

5.03 All activities conducted under this MOU will be in accordance with all applicable rules and regulations of the partner universities, and all applicable federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations.

The parties have executed this Program Agreement on the date and year last specified below.

**University of Wisconsin-Madison**

**[Foreign Institution]**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Carolyn "Biddy" Martin  
Chancellor

[Name]  
[Title]

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

[Add additional signatures as required.]

**Attachment: Full Proposal for Sequential/Dual Degree Program and Formal Named Option**

## Flow Chart of Approval Process