Approval Process

Faculty members interested in starting a new student mobility agreement should contact the Office of the Assistant to the Provost for Global Strategies and Academic Partnerships (also known as the International Partnership Office), who in consultation with the sponsor of the partnership will assist with the development of International Cooperative Agreement and/or International Student Exchange Program Addendum.

- The International Cooperative Agreement is a standardized umbrella agreement between URI and the proposed partner institution.
- The Addendum is an agreement between URI and the partner institutions, which outlines specific details, terms and conditions related to the exchange.

Before the agreement or addendum is signed or students are exchanged, the faculty member must submit to the International Partnership Office, an Exchange Program Request for Approval with the required information and departmental signatures. It is recommended that copies of all student mobility agreements must be shared with the Office of International Education.

Deadlines for Proposing New Mobility Agreements

International Cooperative Agreements and Addenda should be approved approximately twelve months before students are sent or received. This provides the minimum preparation time for recruiting participants and attending to student admission and immigration issues.

Final Approval and Notification

The International Partnership Office is responsible for obtaining final approval from the Provost Office and/or the President.

- The Office of Legal Counsel will send the original signed agreement and addenda to the International Partnership Office for distribution to the partner university.
- The International Partnership Office will send copies of the signed agreement and addenda to the faculty coordinator and other campus departments.
- A copy of the signed agreement will be filed in the Office of International Education.

Responsibilities of the Department Head

The department chair/section chair will give initial approval to the faculty coordinator to begin the approval process for a new student mobility program. Approval of the department head implies that the department is philosophically committed to the intent and letter of the student mobility agreement and will provide the necessary support to initiate and maintain the program for its duration as stipulated in the agreement.
Responsibilities of the Faculty Coordinator

- Serve as the academic advisor for inbound international students (dual degree, 3+x, visiting, exchange, etc.).
- Serve as a liaison to the Office of International Education/OIE in determining transfer credit for outbound URI students.
- Advise outbound URI students about completing URI pre-departure requirements organized by the OIE.
- Serve as a resource to inbound and outbound exchange students for special problems, needs and concerns with the assistance of the OIE.
- Be available to URI students to answer questions about the partner institution and its curriculum.
Overarching Guidelines for Developing Academic Agreements with International Partners

In general, consider the following before initiating a student mobility agreement (e.g., exchange student, visiting student, dual degree program, 3+x, etc.):

1. The international agreement must support and promote the mission and strategic plan of the University of Rhode Island.
2. The international agreement should be financially self-sufficient.
3. In the case of exchange agreements, this implies that URI students would be scheduled to be outbound before or concurrent with the time agreed upon to receive the first inbound international students.
4. In the case of the dual degree incoming student, a financial agreement should be drafted, identifying the rate of tuition, fees, and other payments to be afforded by incoming students; as well as listing of discounts, scholarship and/or grants that may be available for incoming dual degree students.
5. International agreements are established for up to five years. Six months prior to the termination of an agreement the Office of International Education and the faculty coordinator will review the agreement to determine if it should be renewed.
6. Potential partner institutions for international student exchange agreements and dual degree agreements should be carefully chosen based on the following criteria:

   - quality and reputation of the partner institution
   - quality of and access to desired curricular offerings
   - services and programs provided to visiting students
   - quality of housing arrangements, food services, and other student services
   - availability, access and quality of health care services
   - safety at the institution and surrounding region desirability of the location as a study site
   - the partner institution's commitment, support and prior experience with international student exchanges
   - the feasibility of sustaining regular and long-term student participation-for both institutions

The reciprocal nature of the agreement will be addressed in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). The Office of International Education (OIE) is the unit charged with coordinating the process leading to final approval and signing. The final draft of the MOA is reviewed and signed by,

1. Office of International Education/OIE (review and recommendations)
2. Office of Legal Counsel (review and recommendations)
3. Office of Research Compliance (review when appropriate)
4. Graduate School (review and recommendations)
5. Office President or Provost (signature)

If any aspect requires revision, the process reverts to the level where the difficulty may be remedied.
A. Guidelines for Developing Exchange Programs at URI

1. In most cases, each partner institution should send and receive the same number of participants for the same amount of time each academic year. International student exchanges must "balance" which takes into consideration the number of participants as well as their length of stay. Imbalances should be corrected within 2 semesters.

2. Outbound URI students pay the full-time, in-state rate of tuition for the terms of their exchange. This money covers the cost of an inbound exchange student. The outbound URI student does not pay tuition at the partner host institution. Summer attendance and/or interns do not count towards the exchange.

3. If students of unlike academic status are exchanged (for example, undergraduate for graduate students) and there is a cost differential, the student whose tuition exceeds the standard tuition and fees is responsible for paying the difference.

4. Certain URI disciplines are in high demand worldwide. An individual promoting an exchange should not develop an agreement that allows or encourages inbound participants to concentrate in high demand academic course sequences without the permission of the other URI department and/or school involved.

5. If “home stays” are to be used by the foreign institution, it should be agreed upon how the host institution plans to screen the families and students.

6. URI will provide on campus housing for inbound students if desired and depending upon availability at the time of the request. URI does not provide home stays nor does it assist inbound international students in securing off-campus accommodations, except to provide an apartment listing.

7. Exchange participants coming to URI are required to comply with URI's insurance policies and procedures for international students, which includes complying with the United States Affordable Care Act. URI students participating in an exchange are required to have health insurance coverage while abroad.

8. Inbound international exchange students will be admitted to URI as a non-degree, degree or student interns depending on the scope of their academic plan. URI policy requires that all inbound international students on an exchange enter the USA on a J-1 visa and the Office of International Students and Scholars has the responsibility for preparing the appropriate DS-2019 form(s); and/or DS-7002 for student interns.


B. Guidelines for Developing Dual Degree Programs at URI

1. A first step for degree granting colleges interested in the prospect of developing international dual masters and PhD degrees with overseas academic partners would be to focus on existing degrees and agreements that can be accommodated within established degree requirements.

2. Institutions should be compatible. The quality of both overall institution and programs within the institution should match, and interest must exist at all levels.

3. Both universities will participate in design and monitoring of the dual degree program with faculty and staff from both institutions contributing to the establishment of program parameters, goals and objectives.

4. Dual program agreements should build on the academic standing of both universities. The collaboration should enhance each institution's competitive advantage in the discipline as well as their international standing, while nurturing outstanding research that leads faculty and students to scholarly and professional training in an international setting.

5. Students must demonstrate adequate language skills to function in both institutions. Specifics of language levels must be negotiated at the time of agreement.

6. Each program will be responsible for ensuring the appropriate enrollment status for visiting students and establishing the protocol for the paying of stipends, tuition, and fees based on the relevant rules and regulations of the respective universities. Course and program planning for each student is the co-responsibility of the program advisors at each institution. In addition, balance of tuition must be maintained.

7. The terms for submitting a thesis/dissertation, research, inventions and technologies developed as part of the dual degree program must be established by both institutions in the Memorandum of Agreement. Any ownership of inventions will be determined pursuant to US or (partner country) patent laws.

8. All parties must comply with all applicable export control laws and regulations and no party may export or allow the export or re-export of any information or item when to do so would constitute a violation of those laws or regulations.

9. Degrees should be dual, not joint, i.e. they should emerge from coursework and research completed at both institutions.
Responsibilities of the Office of International Education

- Pre-register inbound and outbound students with enrollment related activities
- Assist inbound international students with orientation, registration, fee payments, housing, enrollment, etc.
- Manage international student exchange accounts for participant and financial balances to assure that adequate funding is available to maintain the exchange.
- Provide final approval for the number of students to be exchanged annually.
- Communicate with appropriate personnel at each partner institution and with appropriate personnel in various URI departments regarding the number of students to be exchanged, special problems, policy matters and renewal of agreements.
- Assist the faculty coordinator in providing services to inbound international students and outbound URI students who participate in the exchange program.