

ACADEMIC LINKAGES

Academic linkages are long-term mutually-enriching relationships between two or more academic institutions, departments, schools or faculties. Non-academic partners may also be involved in such linkages if they can play a valid role in teaching, research or other service functions covered by UFV's Education and Strategic Plan.

UFV has established protocols to deal with the following academic linkage possibilities:

- Student exchanges
- Study abroad programs for students
- Faculty Exchange/visiting
- Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) amongst institutions
- Dual Credential Programs
- International Development Projects -- often involving multiple partners
- Transfer Articulation agreements -- such as "2+2s"
- Funded Student Mobility Agreements (CAN-EU, North American Mobility etc.)
- Joint research activities
- Library and documentation exchange
- Exchange of pedagogical material
- Joint participation in seminars and conferences
- Agreements with private partners or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and public agencies leading to cooperative activities such as internships and study abroad
- Other forms of collaboration

The International Department will assist and/or take the lead role in setting up linkage agreements according to the procedures set forth in this document.

UFV POLICY ON LINKAGES WITH OVERSEAS PARTNERS

(1) GENERAL

- a) Links with international institutions are to be encouraged; provided that the partner is an accredited institution with standards comparable to UFV in teaching and research and that there will be clear and anticipated benefits for both parties. Linkage agreements can also be developed with other kinds of legitimate education institutions such as international secondary schools as well as non-educational organizations/agencies that are complementary to UFV's educational goals. UFV may also wish to play a formal role in assisting another institution in a developing country to gain status and reputation.
- b) The International Department, in consultation with the Internationalization Committee, co-ordinates all international agreements with other institutions and all enquiries related to UFV's international programmes should be directed to it. The International Education Department provides a central point for all information related to future and current international linkages.
- c) All formal agreements with institutions/partners will be referred to the President or Vice President for final approval.
- d) Agreements must provide for positive outcomes, and should therefore couple statements of intent with clearly defined mechanisms for achieving objectives.

(2) CATEGORIES OF INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES

Agreements with international universities and other partners will normally fall into the following categories:

- a) University to University agreements: These are usually general Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) and they provide an umbrella for broader participation in a number of linkage activities. They are a framework within which benefits can be achieved for faculty and/or students across a range of areas. Detailed annexes and letters of agreement can be developed and attached to general MOUs that specify particular activities -- such as student exchange, faculty exchange, shared research interests etc.
- b) Faculty to Faculty or School to School agreements: These agreements provide for specific activities in a discrete academic area -- developed according to the procedures set forth in this document.
- c) Schools that want a signed agreement for the purposes of sending students or study tours to UFV will be routinely managed by the International Department unless the resources of particular departments are required.
- d) Dual Credential programs that are part of a trans-national agreement for credential completion.
- e) Agreements/contracts sometimes involving multiple partners such as Canada-EU Mobility agreements and international development projects funded by aid agencies.
- f) Agreements with private partners or NGOs and public agencies leading to cooperative activities such as internships and study abroad.

(3) CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF INSTITUTIONS AND PARTNERS

- a) In general, institutions/partners with which UFV or any of its Departments enters an agreement should be selected on the grounds that they are likely to further UFV's teaching and/or research mission or other service functions.
- b) Linkages should normally only be established with accredited institutions which have standards comparable to UFV in teaching, research and other service areas.
- c) Agreements involving two-way student exchange should be established only where:
 - i. Some degree of compatibility between the teaching programmes offered by the two institutions has been established to enable UFV students -- and the partner's visiting students -- to continue their studies abroad without disruption to their academic goals and/or they provide study opportunities which are not available at their home institutions.
 - ii. The entry requirements for UFV are maintained -- students who have a lower level of English than is specified by institutional policy for entry into academic programs will be accepted into ESL or ESL/Foundations programs.

- iii. The Department considers that a sufficient number of students would be interested in taking advantage of the linkage and that the proposed agreement offers academic benefits.
- d) Agreements primarily focusing on articulation and transfer programs for degree/credential completion at UFV must include the following considerations:
 - i. The Registrar's Office will be consulted to determine the accreditation status of the sending institution.
 - ii. The UFV Department receiving the transfer students will examine the curriculum of the sending institution in order to determine the transfer status of courses and programs.
 - iii. The receiving Department will involve other UFV Departments in articulation determination when it is required.
 - iv. The agreement will include provisions for English language assessment and appropriate placement at UFV.
- e) Agreements involving faculty exchange should be established only when there are faculty members known to be interested in maintaining and fostering the linkage.
- f) Agreements with partners that could involve internships or work experience abroad will be developed in conjunction with the Career Centre.
- g) Agreements for one way student mobility (to UFV) will be handled by the International Education Department as part of their normal recruiting activities.

(4) APPROVAL PROCEDURES

These procedures are designed to ensure that appropriate consultation and advice are provided prior to a proposed agreement being placed before the Vice-President or President for signing. Proposed agreements will be forwarded to the Internationalization Committee for advice -- in some circumstances where timing is important and the agreement is straightforward such advice may be given by E mail. Administrative support during the development and maintenance of a partnership agreement is provided by the International Department in consultation with the Internationalization Committee, the Department(s) involved and the Dean(s) for the area(s).

Although proposals for University to University and other partnership agreements might originate from a number of sources, the suggested procedure for evaluating and approving such proposals is as follows:

- a) When a proposal for linkage with a particular institution is communicated to the International Department it will consult with appropriate Department(s) and Dean(s) to ascertain interest.
- b) If the agreement involves internships or work experience abroad, it will be developed in conjunction with the Career Centre.
- c) The Registrar's Office will be consulted to do an assessment of the partner institution's accreditation status.

- d) If the agreement involves student exchange with cross-crediting, it is also passed to the Registrar's Office for advice and comment. The level of support from the academic department(s) will determine whether to proceed with the agreement or to terminate the process -- the academic department will determine the articulation status of transfer courses in conjunction with the Registrar's Office.
- e) If the negotiation proceeds, administrative support will be provided by the International Department. In student exchange agreements, all details of the student exchange, including funding and articulation issues, will be included.
- f) After review by the Internationalization Committee, the process will be concluded with a recommendation of adoption to the Vice-President or President.
- g) All Agreements must also satisfy the appropriate criteria (Section 3) before being signed by the Vice-President or President.
- h) Implementation: While the International Office can provide administrative assistance and advice including model agreements, draft letters and documents, and advice on admission procedures, the academic department involved will normally be expected to provide assistance for administering and maintaining the agreement, including student exchange and articulation updates.

(5) EVALUATION OF LINKAGES

Normally, all agreements will include clauses regarding evaluation, continuation, termination, dispute resolution, liability etc. Monitoring should be constant during the life of any Agreement, but evaluation should be particularly thorough prior to the renewal or termination date. An evaluation should include both the intensity of interest and whether this has waned, and the outcomes of the agreement for both institutions for faculty and students.