

Due diligence and partnership governance processes

Institutional partnerships are managed by the Global Office, which is responsible for co-ordinating due diligence, supporting proposals and approvals, negotiating Agreements, managing partnership operations and communications, supporting engagement across the community, and assuring the quality of the student experience and support available to staff and students.

Our approach to managing partnerships is designed to be robust, secure, and academically focused. We aim to provide opportunities for the development of partnerships in as diverse a manner as possible whilst ensuring that we observe the principles of collaborative provision outlined by the QAA and maintain compliance with policy and legislation. We strive to work in a collegiate manner across the institution to make best use of expertise in all areas and aim to anticipate external developments, identify opportunities and to react positively to challenges.

Principles:

The Global Office role is to facilitate and support partnership activity across the institution and to provide mechanisms by which such activity can be appropriately managed. Programme set up, implementation, renewal, and review forms part of this and is founded upon appropriate and proportionate risk and due diligence processes.

The relevant processes for various types of collaboration supported by the University are outlined here. Alongside the below, it is recommended that you read the guide on the [Collaborative Provision of Programmes](#) which outlines the general types of collaboration available, and the overall institutional approach to their creation.

Processes are proportionate and are intended to ensure good functioning of collaborative activity. Drivers for risk and due diligence processes are:

- Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of students and staff involved in collaborative activity
- Providing educational partnerships which enhance learning experiences
- Meeting commitments to operate in ways which meet or exceed quality assurance framework expectations, such as those set by the QAA
- Creating collaborative projects which are underpinned by a strategic partnership, and which are a genuinely joint enterprise
- Ensuring that activity aligns with legal, governmental, and insurance requirements
- Negotiating arrangements which work in accordance with University policy and associated procedures, and which are set in the context of University strategy, existing links, and commitments
- Securing the financial and reputational status of the University
- Managing risks in internationalisation, in areas such as academic freedom, intellectual property, cyber security, etc.

Responsibilities:

[Proposal forms](#) act as the basis for initial consideration and are dependent on the needs of a [type of programme or collaboration](#).

MoU

A Memorandum of Understanding (or MoU) establishes a broad commitment to work with another institution. It may be established at a high level, to cover potential partnership activity between two universities, for example, or it may focus on one Faculty, academic discipline, or area of research as necessary. It is typically a non-legally binding document outlining a shared intention to work together on projects, and it may form the basis of a future relationship which requires more substantive legal documents to establish exchanges, collaborative programmes, or other formal mechanisms for collaboration. It may be required to facilitate formal research or other collaboration depending on a partner's national requirements by, for example easing immigration or other mobility requirements.

An MoU may be proposed by **any member of University staff**, and should be approved by the relevant Head of School, Head of Unit, Centre/Institute Director, Associate Dean/Provost, or member of the Principal's Office.

Requests for the establishment of an MoU should be provided to the **Global Office** who will discuss intended outcomes, parameters, and relevant institutional approval before liaising with the partner on contract creation. An MoU proposal form will be requested, which provides the relevant information to ensure that any formal contract captures the basis of the collaboration, and which ensures any governance processes that may need to be conducted can be identified. MoU proposal forms will request School or Unit (or other appropriate) sign off, prior to submission to the Director of the Global Office.

An MoU is typically established for three or five years and may be renewed or renegotiated to update intentions, etc., with the same approval as for the original collaboration.

Exchange or outbound study abroad Agreement

These collaborative arrangements often support School initiatives for their students to engage in formal study abroad programmes for a semester or full year as part of their degree, under the School Abroad banner. The Global Office also establishes exchange programmes where the relationship fits across multiple Schools under the St Andrews Abroad banner. For either programme, approved credits and grades are converted by the **academic School** and **Registry** upon return to St Andrews and are used in degree classification as appropriate.

Where an **academic School** wishes to put in place a new student exchange, an Exchange and Study Abroad Agreement Proposal form is first required. This should be completed and provided to the **Global Office** for review and comment at which stage they may input any suggestions for amendment, flag any concerns, or provide sign off from the partnership perspective. The Global Office can also support a proposal form's completion with guidance and assistance as required and is available to discuss potential projects. Once Global Office sign off is provided, proposals require Head of School sign off, and final approval is via the **Curriculum Approvals Group** (CAG).

Once approved, the **Global Office** will negotiate a contract for the relationship with the partner institution, which will typically be in place for five-years at a time. Proposal review and support, contractual processing and management, and programme implementation support are all elements of Global Office provision. Consequent resource implications mean appropriate lead in

times are necessary and that project development may sometimes need to be prioritised depending on overall workload.

If a St Andrews Abroad programme is in place, a School may be invited to join via an opt-in form and preparatory requirements are not as detailed due to the presence of an existing relationship founded on the principles for a new exchange programme.

Work placements

Similarly to study abroad placements under exchange or outbound study abroad relationships, work placements are credit-bearing placements which are undertaken as an integral part of a St Andrews degree programme, and which are hosted by a third party outside the University learning environment. They may often be undertaken at an industry, business, or educational partner, or other professional working environment. Many are conducted at well-established partners of academic Schools, or through programmes such as the British Council's language assistantship programme. Others are bespoke arrangements selected by a student in partnership with their academic School.

Work placements are often undertaken for a full academic year (minimum 7 months) when within the degree or may be for a shorter period during the academic year or the summer period. They can be paid or unpaid, compulsory, or optional, and may take place in the UK, Europe, or worldwide.

Work placements must be underpinned by a risk assessment conducted by the **academic School** into the host institution. Where a host provides placements for multiple students, or over multiple years, these may be proportionate to the relationship rather than being required for each participant. Individual placements require an individual risk assessment.

In addition, a work placement agreement must be completed which establishes the responsibilities and expectations for the student, St Andrews, and the host institution, and outlines the manner in which credits will be achieved and assessed.

Approval is not pursued by proposal forms such as are required for other types of collaboration outlined here but is conditional on appropriate risk assessment having been conducted.

Collaborative taught degree, articulation, validation

A collaborative taught degree facilitates a joint programme between St Andrews and a partner university or consortium of universities. Most such relationships are at the postgraduate taught level and operate on a two-year basis, but they may also be undergraduate programmes, such as the joint degree with the College of William and Mary (BA International Honours programme).

As a preference, these degrees result in a single joint degree award, via one certificate which refers to each of the partner institutions and carries their crests. Alternatively, in cases where the partner cannot issue a joint degree due to national legislation or other policy or regulatory requirements, a dual degree may be approved so long as each certificate references the partnership and collaborative nature of the award.

Articulation arrangements are made with other Higher or Further Education institutions or professional bodies to allow progression into or out of a programme of study offered at St Andrews. Credit achieved at one provider is transferred to the award completed at the other, but the programme is not a joint enterprise, and the final outcome award is individual to one institution, with the relevant responsibility for individual components retained by the institution delivering those parts which it provides.

Validation is the award of an academic qualification by St Andrews, for a programme delivered either jointly or wholly by the partner institution. The University has responsibility for the maintenance of quality assurance and academic standards, and these are subject to the same requirements as a standard St Andrews degree.

For each of these three types of programmes, the **academic School** proposing the arrangement should complete a Collaborative Business Case, and provide additional supporting documentation, including a letter of support from the partner institution, a financial plan, and a risk assessment. **Schools** are also responsible for a Programme proposal and if relevant, Module proposals to provide comprehensive details of curriculum arrangements for any undergraduate or postgraduate taught programmes. Consideration should also be given to whether the proposal requires interaction with Trusted Research protocols.

As with other collaboration types, the Global Office plays a key role in liaison and support at the outset of modelling and will provide input to the proposal including wherever recommendations for amendment or questions regarding process are relevant. Once these processes have been completed, and the Global Office signals sign off from the partnership perspective, the proposal will be advanced to the next stage where approval is via the **Principal's Office** initially, followed by **CAG**, and proposals must be supported by the Head of School.

Following approval, the **Global Office** will negotiate the contractual basis for the relationship. Contracts will usually be in place for five years.

Global PhDs/co-tutelles

Global PhDs are programmes offered by St Andrews and a partner institution towards a joint PhD degree. Where these are conducted individually for a single student with another university partner, they are known as co-tutelles. Some institutions around the world refer to them variously as co-tutelles, joint PhDs, or double degrees, depending on local nomenclature and on the format of the outcome award. St Andrews prefers that these arrangements result in a single joint award with a certificate outlining the collaborative nature of the degree, but multiple degree certificates are permissible so long as they clearly reference the collaboration and the partner institution.

Proposal is via a bespoke Global PhD proposal form which should be completed and submitted to the Global Office by the **proposing supervisor** at St Andrews. Completion will necessitate discussion with the co-supervisor at the partner institution, and the **Global Office** can support the work if required.

Global PhDs or co-tutelles must be signed off by the **Head of School and the Director of Postgraduate Research**. School approval is a commitment to any costs which may be agreed in the proposal, including fees for external examiners. Once signed off by the School the proposal

will be reviewed by the **Global Office** and approved by the **Associate Provost Education**. Consideration should also be given to whether the proposal requires interaction with Trusted Research protocols.

Following approval, the **Global Office** will work with the partner to create the contract to support the programme. For Global PhD programmes, contracts will normally be in place for five years. Where a programme exists, an Individual Candidate Agreement (ICA) outlining the specifics of a student's PhD programme will also be required. ICAs and individual co-tutelle contracts will be negotiated for the duration of a student's programme alone.

Collaborative research funding, joint seed funding

Where St Andrews has a relationship with a partner institution through which each party provides funding for competitive collaborative research projects, such as through the Collaborative Research Grants programme with Bonn, Charles, Emory, and Padua, the **Global Office** is responsible for maintaining the parameters of the relationship, and for creating a contractual basis for operation. Consideration should be given to whether the activity requires interaction with Trusted Research protocols.

Since these relationships involve financial commitment, initial approval is through the **Principal's Office and/or the Deans** and may follow or bring about **discussion with the partner institution** towards an agreed position. Programmes are reviewed each year, and any changes to the levels of funding, protocols for application, decision-making processes, or other related items are subject to **committee analysis** which includes Principal's Office, Decanal, and Global Office representation. Annual awards from these schemes are made by a similarly constituted **committee**.

Seed funding relationships facilitate teaching and research collaboration depending on the nature of the project and are approved, reviewed, and renewed by the **Deans and the Global Office**.

Additional preparation

In addition to the proposal and approval mechanisms outlined above, all outward student activity which is conducted under a collaborative arrangement, and which is undertaken under the auspices of St Andrews requires that **a student** creates a travel submission within the University's [Travel Tool](#) for recording of activity, and to ensure appropriate insurance provision, emergency response availability, and that overall welfare and safety measures are in place. The **Global Office** assists with the record of the travel, monitors activity, and provides guidance and updates as appropriate to individual circumstances. **EHSS** has ultimate responsibility for assessing any required risk assessments within the tool, and insurance-related advice is provided by **Planning**.

As well as offering guidance and advice on the creation of proposals, and conducting contractual discussions with partners, the **Global Office** has responsibility for institutional risk assessment and due diligence processes prior to the establishment of a collaboration.

Risk and due diligence work is conducted by the **Global Office** through the mechanisms below depending on partnership and activity type, and on existing institutional partnership activity with the individual institution or in the destination or partner country:

- Institutional profile
- National Higher Education setting profile
- Risk assessment tool

All the above inform decisions to proceed.

Once established, additional assessment processes are undertaken throughout a collaboration. Principles and agreed parameters are defined in contracts, aligned to the principles of collaborative provision outlined by the QAA.

Onward monitoring of collaborative activity:

For all collaborative programmes, annual joint committee meetings act as a point of reference and a forum to raise issues. The University's [five-stage review process](#) is instrumental to continuous review and assessment.

Collaborations are also monitored through annual study abroad review processes, student reports, institutional risk assessment protocols, routine study or work abroad documentation, and ad hoc investigation. Methods used are listed below:

- Review of established programmes within the five-stage review process
- Joint committee meetings
- School and St Andrews Abroad reviews
- School risk assessment for work placements
- Fieldwork risk assessment
- Travel submission and associated risk assessment
- Work placement and Learning agreement

Work placement agreements and learning agreements must be completed by **a student** with the support and approval of their **academic School** prior to, or at the latest within four weeks of the start of approved study or work abroad activity. These form the basis of the academic requirements of the programme and set expectations for module, course, or work activities to be completed, and the requirements for credits to be attained and converted back to the St Andrews degree. Should a student's activity change during the placement, due to alterations to available modules, for example, a change form should be completed, and a final completion of learning or work placement form indicates the successful (or otherwise) completion of the agreed programme of work or study.

Schools are responsible for conducting risk assessments for each work placement provider.

Students must submit a travel submission prior to departure to record their activity.

If undertaking fieldwork, **a student** must complete a fieldwork risk assessment as part of their travel submission.

Students are asked to complete reports on their activity where participating in approved placements as part of their degree, and these reports are an important part of Global Office review processes for partnership activity. Where **a student** is funded by the Turing scheme, programme reports are also required.

The **Global Office** conducts annual reviews of all School Abroad and St Andrews Abroad programmes, and all collaborative programme activity, and submits reports on them to the [Academic Monitoring Group \(Collaborations and Partnerships\)](#) which has responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of the University's approach to managing collaborative provision and partnerships, guided by the principles of the UK Quality Code.

Renewal processes

Other than for an MoU, a renewal of any of the relationships described here is conducted through stage five of the University's five-stage review process. Discussions and renewal decisions are a partnership between the **academic School**, the **Global Office**, and **AMG** and are subject to institutional approval. Renewal, if sought, will require an updated Agreement which will be managed by the **Global Office** and will ensure regulatory and policy compliance, and will be established for another three, or more usually, five-year period.