

Hong Kong Baptist University

Guidelines on Academic Partnership Formation and Renewal/Amendment of Agreement

Preamble

1. Extending our global partnership network is one of the University's strategic priorities. While partnership can help increase visibility, extend our expertise, and enhance global experience, it involves costs and risks. With a view to managing and mitigating risks, the *Guidelines on Academic Formation and Renewal/Amendment of Agreement* (the Guidelines) is provided. The Guidelines aims to govern the academic partnerships and agreements with substantial commitment while entrusting Faculty/School to engage in academic activities with manageable risks. The balance between central governance and decentralised decision-making underpins the formulation of the Guidelines.

Scope of Guidelines

2. This set of guidelines applies to academic partnerships with substantial commitment (or major agreements) in the areas of teaching and learning, research, and knowledge transfer. The collaborating partners can be from different sectors (e.g. academic, non-governmental and business organisations). The Deans/Supervising VPs decide on whether a partnership/agreement involves substantial commitment, which should be subject to the approval and reporting mechanisms explained below. The Guidelines should be read together with the University Policies and Guidelines on Contract Formation and Management.
3. Academic partnerships include, among others, joint degree programmes, dual degree programmes, university-wide student exchange commitment or other high-level partnerships, and other deep collaboration with substantial financial commitment/implications. The "Agreement" in these guidelines includes, but is not limited to, formal agreement, Memorandum of Understanding, and addendum to an agreement.

Guiding Principles for Partnership

4. Five major guiding principles are proposed to underpin the partnership formation:
 - (a) **Contribution to the University:** It is expected that the collaboration should contribute to the vision and mission and strategic aspiration of the University/Faculty. Colleagues should provide sound rationale and clear objectives for the proposed collaboration and justifications as necessary.
 - (b) **Flexibility:** Flexibility should be provided for the negotiation of the format and terms for collaboration to enable creative and innovative partnership.
 - (c) **Governance:** It is equally important that colleagues follow the guidelines, approval protocol, and any other policies, regulations and guidelines applicable to the collaboration for the sake of effective communication among related parties and strengthening the University governance.

(d) Ownership: Ownership of the collaborative activities/agreements resides at two levels: the Faculty (including the Faculty and the department) and the University.

(e) Risk management: Proposers of the collaboration should assess and analyse as to whether there are any risks for the collaboration, including reputational risk. If risks are identified, preventive measures should be implemented to avoid their happening or contingency plans should be made. Reciprocal rights and obligations should be set forth clearly.

Approval Procedures and Reporting

5. Clearance Procedures:

- a) Proposers of the collaborative activities shall have the responsibility to obtain clearance from relevant central offices or other parties as appropriate in relation to policies and regulations, legality, IP arrangements, and related matters, by submitting the proposal and the draft agreements through the Academic Partnerships Tracking Platform, which was established based on the Proposal Form (Appendix 1). Proposers should go through the internal endorsement process by the respective Department Heads/Directors and Deans before proceeding with the internal clearance procedures.
- b) The proposal and the draft agreements shall be submitted to relevant central units for clearance simultaneously unless there is a reason for sequential clearance.
- c) Proposers shall ensure to obtain clearance from all relevant central offices or other parties. Proposers shall highlight the areas changed and state clearly which areas of concern, if any, have not been addressed with justifications. Also, proposers shall bring to the attention of Department Head/Director and Dean any feedback received during the internal clearance and seek final endorsement from him/her on this proposal of collaboration.
- d) After the internal clearance procedures are completed, the proposer should seek approval from the supervising Associate VP/VP, and the final approval of partnership agreements from the Provost or P/VC as appropriate. For the University-level agreements in relation to central funding, approval from the Senate via the Academic Development Committee (ADC) is required. In exceptional cases (e.g. agreements with large international consortiums, and alliance made at the national level with political and major strategic implications), Council-level reporting and/or approval may be necessary.
- e) The International Office (INTL) is the central coordination unit of academic partnership agreements. Once the partnership is approved, proposers shall arrange signing of the agreement and send the duly signed agreement to INTL for record.

6. The following are the items for clearance and the respective clearance parties.

Items	Clearance Parties	Remarks
Undergraduate/Postgraduate studies regulations		For activities which require approval from relevant committees, the clearance parties shall advise on the necessary
- Undergraduate programmes	Academic Registry	
- Taught postgraduate programmes	Graduate School	
- Research Postgraduate programmes	Graduate School	
- Quality assurance mechanism/matters for academic programmes	Academic Quality Support Section, AR	

Research collaboration	Research Administration Team, Research Office	procedures.
Intellectual Properties/Consultancy policies/guidelines	Knowledge Transfer Office	
Legal matters	General Administration Office	
Financial clearance/matters	Finance Office	
Involvement of international collaborators, student exchange	International Office	
Involvement of Mainland collaborators, student exchange	Mainland Development Office	

7. Collaborative agreements can be made at different levels:

- i. Department/Programme level (Department/Academy/Programme/Centre/Unit)
- ii. Faculty level (Faculty/School)
- iii. University level

8. The following table shows the protocol for approval of agreements at different levels:

Level	Negotiation of Arrangements of Activities for the Collaboration	Resources Implications (borne by)	Final Endorsement	Final Approval Authority	Signatory (Parties specified below or delegate)	Duration of Agreement
Department	Head of the respective Department/Academy/Centre/unit	Department/Academy /Centre/unit (or relevant Pls/PS) concerned	Supervising AVP/VP	Provost	Faculty Dean	Agreements shall normally not exceed a 5-year timeframe. Depending on the nature and duration of the agreement, review of the collaboration shall take place not less than six months before expiry of the agreement.
Faculty	Faculty/School Dean	Faculty (or departments in the Faculty) concerned	Supervising AVP/VP	Provost	The responsible VP, depending on the nature of the collaboration	
Administrative units	Head of the unit	The administrative unit	Supervising AVP/VP	Provost/ P/VC	Supervising AVP/VP/ P/VC	
University	P/VC or Provost in consultation with G5, and SECO as necessary	Central funding subject to availability and approval by P/VC and where relevant, Finance Committee; and/or external funding	Supervising AVP/VP	ADC/Senate/ Council where necessary	P/VC or Provost	
	For University-wide exchange agreements: INTL	Conference attendance / student advising: INTL ; Accommodation/ Counselling: SA/	VPTL	P/VC	P/VC or Provost	Depending on the nature of the collaboration, an agreement period of more than 5 years may be more desirable, and subject to mutual agreement.

9. **Record maintenance:** A copy of the signed partnership agreement should be sent to INTL for central record maintenance.

10. **Monitoring mechanism:**

- a) Programme/Department/Faculty level: Faculties should ensure that (i) an annual review of all forms of collaboration under the Faculties' ownership be provided in the Faculty's Annual Report to the Senior Executive Committee (SECO), ii) if the collaboration is programme-based, it should also be reviewed in the Annual Quality Assurance Report, and iii) for collaboration initiated by administrative units, an annual review of the collaboration should be included in the annual report to the SECO.
- b) University level: An annual report shall be submitted to the SECO and Council for information and discussion.

Prepared by Graduate School

Revised on 5 June 2017 (incorporating Deans' comments)

Revised on 29 August 2017 (incorporating Provost's comments)

Revised on 16 September 2017 (for ADC's re-consideration)

Revised by International Office on 31 December 2018 (incorporating comments from the Academic Partnership Formation Working Group)

Revised by Graduate School on 22 July 2020

Revised by International Office on 22 July 2022 (incorporating the restructuring of SCA and enhancement of Academic Partnerships Tracking Platform)

Hong Kong Baptist University

Proposal for Academic Partnership Formation and Renewal/Amendment of Agreement

Notes:

Please read the *Guidelines on Academic Partnership Formation and Renewal/Amendment of Agreement* before filling out this form.

1. This form applies to major agreements on academic collaboration in the areas of teaching and learning, research, and knowledge transfer with substantial commitment.
2. Approvals of University-level agreements rest with the President and others with the Provost. Proposers should go through the internal endorsement process by the respective Department Heads/Directors and Deans before proceeding with the Clearance Procedures (Part 5). The draft agreements should then be cleared by the relevant central units as stipulated in the *Guidelines*.
3. Upon completion of Clearance Procedures (Part 5), this form should be sent to the International Office for checking. Please state clearly if there are any concerns raised by the clearance parties that you (being the proposer) have not addressed. Please provide justifications, where appropriate. Proposer should bring the attention of Department Head/Director and Dean any feedback received during the internal clearance and seek final endorsement from them on this proposal of collaboration. Once checked, the form shall be returned to the proposer to seek approval by the supervising AVP/VP, and final approval by Provost/President as appropriate.
4. Fast track clearance is available if standard templates/clauses are adopted. Other types of documents will normally take 10 working days for initial clearance.

Part 1. Information of prospective partner

(Please use a separate form for each partner for collaboration with more than one partner.)

Name of partner: (English) (Chinese, if applicable)		
Nature of business:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Higher education institution	<input type="checkbox"/> Research institute	
<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-governmental organisation		
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-profit-making organisation		
<input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____		<i>(please specify)</i>
Country:	Website:	
Brief description of partner, including its <u>legal status</u>. Please provide evidence in support of its legal status.		
Status/ranking if applicable: <i>(please add new rows to this item if necessary.)</i>		
	Please tick or specify ranking, where relevant	Remarks (if any)
QS Ranking*		
Times Higher Education*		
ARWU (<i>Academic Ranking of World Universities</i>)*		
Project 211 institution		
Project 985 institution		
Others <i>(please specify)</i>		

Contact person at partner institution:	Name:	Email:
	Position:	Telephone:
	Address:	

* Please provide the latest results, and specify the years and types (e.g. global/regional/faculty/subject/etc.) as appropriate.

Part 2. About the collaboration

<p>Partnership history:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> New partner <input type="checkbox"/> Existing partner but <u>new type</u> of collaboration <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal of agreement <input type="checkbox"/> Additional partner for an existing collaboration <input type="checkbox"/> Amendment to existing collaboration <input type="checkbox"/> Others (please specify) <p>_____</p>
<p>Scope of collaboration (You can make more than one entry):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Academic programme(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Level: UG/TPg/RPg (please delete as appropriate) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Dual Degree programme (please specify) <p>_____</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Joint Degree programme (please specify) <p>_____</p> <input type="checkbox"/> University-wide exchange programme <input type="checkbox"/> Others (please specify) <p>_____</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Research collaboration with substantial commitments <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge transfer collaboration with substantial commitments <input type="checkbox"/> Others (please specify) <p>_____</p>
<p>Description of the collaboration:</p> <p>(Please attach relevant supporting documents, such as draft agreement, MOU or addendum. For renewal of agreement, please make reference to the previous agreement(s) and highlight the changes made.)</p>
<p>Rationale for the collaboration:</p>

Evaluation of the collaboration (for renewal of agreement):

(How did you evaluate the effectiveness of the previous collaboration? Please provide quantifiable data in relation to the evaluation, if appropriate.)

How will the collaboration help realise the University's aspiration of being a leading international research-led liberal arts university, and/or advance the development of the Department/Faculty, if appropriate?

Risks identified:

(Please assess and analyse if any risks will be incurred for the proposed collaboration.)

(Please explain if any measures will be implemented to avoid/minimize the risks identified, and/or if there are any contingency/remedial plans.)

Engagement of external legal advisor

(Please indicate whether an external legal adviser has been engaged. If yes, please provide the (i) name of the legal firm, (ii) name and contact details of the lawyer, and (iii) scope of advice [if available, a summary of the advice received].

Part 3. Declaration

(Please the following boxes and sign this form.)

- I understand and agree to comply with all the rules and regulations, policies and procedural requirements and/or conditions imposed as necessary for this collaboration.
- I do not have any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest with the partner.
- I will bring to the attention of Department Head/Director and Dean any feedback received during the internal clearance and seek final endorsement from them on this proposal of collaboration. I will ensure to obtain clearance from all relevant offices/parties.
- This proposal is for collaboration activities at the Departmental/Faculty/University* level.
(please delete as appropriate)*

Proposed by:

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Position: _____

Unit/department/office: _____

Ext.: _____

Date: _____

Part 4. Internal endorsement

4.1 Endorsement by unit/department Head/Director *(if the proposer is not the Head)*

I hereby endorse this application and understand its resource or other implications for the Department.

Recommendations/justifications/comments:

Signature (Unit/Department Head/Director): _____

Date:

4.2 Endorsement by Dean

I hereby endorse this application and understand its resource or other implications for the department and/or the Faculty.

Recommendations/justifications/comments:

Signature (Dean): _____

Date:

Part 5. Clearance procedures

Items	Units	Relevant?	For further review/ comment?	Cleared	Signature	Cleared on [date]	Remarks by clearance party, <i>if any</i>
UG studies regulations	AR	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
TPg or RPg studies regulations	GS	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
Quality assurance mechanism/matters for academic programmes	AQSS, AR	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
Involvement of international collaborators; student exchange	INTL	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
Research collaboration	RO	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
Involvement of Mainland collaborators	MDEV	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
Intellectual properties; consultancy policies/guidelines	KTO	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
Finance matters; financial clearance	FO	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
Legal issues	GAO	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				

Part 6. Final endorsement and approval

I acknowledge to have obtained clearance from all relevant central offices/parties and have fully addressed the comments given by relevant parties.

6.1 Endorsement by supervising AVP/VP

I hereby endorse this application.

Recommendations/justifications/comments:

Signature (AVP/VP _____): _____

Date:

6.2 Approval by Provost/President

I hereby approve this application.

Recommendations/justifications/comments:

Signature (Provost/President): _____

Date: