I. Purpose and Scope

As part of its overall educational, research, and service missions, Western Kentucky University develops ongoing partnerships with international universities and other institutions outside the United States. These partnerships, formalized through agreements, promote student, faculty, and staff exchanges as well as international research, service, and economic development opportunities. As WKU has actively pursued the goal of becoming “A Leading American University with International Reach,” the number and complexity of such agreements have increased. The following policy and attendant guidelines are meant to ensure that the University’s international agreements are developed and reviewed in a systematic way promoting carefully considered, high quality, and mutually beneficial partnerships.

This policy does not apply to international agreements related to the sponsoring of research, or to contracts related to research or outreach.

II. Policy

1. WKU employees who wish to develop international agreements between the University and institutions or organizations outside of the United States must consult with the Executive Director of the Office of International Programs (or his/her designee) before such agreements are negotiated and should observe the principles and practices of international agreements as reflected in the attached guidelines (Appendix A).

2. International agreements that commit WKU resources must be authorized by the President or by the Provost.
3. A copy of all WKU international agreements must be filed with the Office of International Programs (OIP). That office will maintain an accessible registry of the agreements that will be reviewed annually by the OIP and the International Education Council (IEC).

III. Procedure

1. The Originating Department/College proposing a new partnership with a foreign university or organization will complete the Proposal Development Worksheet (Appendix C) and submit it to the Office of International Programs. Append any additional information about the proposed partner, as appropriate.

2. Lead faculty and administrators from the Originating Department/College will meet with the Executive Director of International Programs for preliminary review of the proposed partnership. If there is a consensus to move forward, OIP staff and the lead faculty will jointly prepare an appropriate document that will be reviewed by the International Education Council.

3. If approved by the IEC, the draft document will be forwarded to the partner university/organization for its review and approval. Any requested changes will be jointly negotiated by OIP, the Originating Department/College, and the foreign partner.

4. The final document will be signed first by the partner university/organization and then routed for final approval and signature by the appropriate WKU officials.

IV. Related Policies

V. Reason for Revision

November 28, 2011: Inclusion of Appendices B & C; expansion of Section III (Procedure).

Appendices

A. WKU Guidelines for Developing and Maintaining International Exchange and Cooperative Agreements

B. Sample Memorandum of Understanding

C. Proposal Development Worksheet and Routing Form for Approval of International Exchange and Cooperative Agreements
Appendix A: WKU Guidelines for Developing and Maintaining International Exchange and Cooperative Agreements

PURPOSE

WKU seeks to develop and maintain active, high-quality, mutually beneficial partnerships with institutions outside the United States. In its active pursuit of international agreements that promote its educational missions (including research and service learning), WKU is resolved to be intentional and purposeful in the scope, number, and quality of such agreements.

The following document describes guidelines for the development of exchange or other international agreements between any unit at WKU and an institutional partner located outside of the United States. Specifically, this document will delineate recommended procedures regarding the establishment of international exchange agreements through an examination of the types of agreements, guiding considerations and issues, and an overview of the approval and authorization process.

Questions about the applicability of these procedures to specific proposals or projects should be addressed to the Office of International Programs (OIP).

PROCESS

These guidelines outline a process for developing and completing the signing of an international agreement:

I. Early Stage Planning
II. Authorization and Approval Process

I. Early Stage Planning

A. Types of Agreements

Many varieties of international agreements are possible, and the specific format of an individual agreement will depend on its purpose and scope. Two common types of international agreements are the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA).

Typically, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a general document drafted to reflect or promote good will between the parties. It usually does not specify detailed actions or projects, although it may allude to the development of such plans at a later date. The MOU may be a precursor to a more detailed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), which does normally stipulate the specific terms, conditions, and implementation processes that govern the proposed partnership. MOAs are normally developed to govern the exchange of students, faculty, or types of projects that require specific commitments from the involved parties.

The process for developing a MOU is much less stringent than is required of the MOA. The considerations and issues outlined in this Guideline document are relevant to the development of the MOA, not the general MOU. However, Memoranda of Understanding also require careful consideration because they carry with them implied future actions. In some cases, the failure to
follow up with MOUs may cause misunderstandings that could be harmful to future relationships between the institutions.

Templates and examples of these and other agreements are available through the Office of International Programs.

B. Considerations

Before pursuing the development of an agreement, the potential for exchange and program compatibility should be considered in order to establish the feasibility and appropriateness of the desired agreement.

The potential for exchange will be determined based on the following considerations:

1. Significant exchange possibilities should exist in at least one of the following areas: student, faculty, research, or service;
2. The initiative should have significant commitment from at least one University unit (e.g., academic department, college, support unit);
3. If funding comes initially from external sources, e.g. federal grants, the institutional commitment should continue beyond the life of the grant unless explicitly stated that the relationship is active only during the administration of that grant;
4. For student exchanges, potential should exist for long-term interest and activity; and
5. It should be mutually beneficial to all parties.

The compatibility of the proposed exchange agreement with the mission and objectives of WKU will also be scrutinized. To that end, the following requirements should be fulfilled:

1. If the proposed agreement is in a region or country where WKU already has similar programmatic exchange relationships, there must be a compelling rationale for the establishment of the proposed agreement and a demonstrated benefit to the University;
2. Proposing departments at both institutions should possess compatibility of interests and should show a strong willingness to sustain an on-going relationship;
3. If academic credit is earned at the host institution, academic credit must be appropriately recognized at both institutions;
4. Academic expectations and criteria should be clearly defined for participants in exchanges;
5. Academic calendars of the two institutions should be taken into consideration;
6. An infrastructure to administer the exchange at the host institution must be identified;
7. WKU’s financial responsibilities and commitments are clarified; and
8. The mutual expectations with respect to all facets of the agreement should be clear to all parties. (In addition to academic expectations, these may include such matters as housing arrangements, assistance with travel, degree of mentorship or advisement, extracurricular involvement.)

C. Issues

In addition to the general considerations discussed above, early stage planning must account for key issues.
1. **Financial Issues**: Careful consideration must be given to the proposed agreement's commitment of University resources, including items such as the following: The assignment of administrative staff, faculty, or graduate student (research assistant or project assistant) support on an ongoing basis; the commitment of institutional funds (departmental, school, or college funding) on an ongoing basis; the exchange of faculty, staff, or students; or extramural funding for research collaborations that presume/require specific institution-to-institution agreements.

2. **Immigration issues**: Both incoming and outgoing participants typically need visas issued by the host country in order to participate in an exchange program. Visa application procedures can be detailed and often require significant lead time that might affect application deadlines and scheduling. For participants inbound to WKU, appropriate documentation will be issued. All questions regarding immigration issues should be directed to the Office of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) for inbound students and the Office of Study Abroad and Global Learning (SAGL) for outbound students.

3. **Administrative support**: The unit or units developing an Exchange Agreement are responsible for some administrative support necessary to sustain the relationship. Examples of responsibilities include identifying WKU students interested in taking part in the exchange and providing advising to both incoming and outgoing students regarding academic options. The Office of Study Abroad and Global Learning (SAGL) will provide administrative support to outgoing WKU students in the form of processing of applications and providing general assistance, including the coordination of information sessions, pre-departure preparation, and assistance in dissemination of program availability.

4. **Safety, security, and local arrangements**: Any potential Exchange Agreement partner institution must be carefully reviewed in terms of safety, security, and acceptability of local arrangements (housing, work setting, dining, etc.) for WKU students, faculty, and staff. Normally, this review will entail a visit to the institution and a brief written report before the agreement is approved. OIP can provide a review template for such visits.

5. **Review**: The agreement must address the parties' plans for a review of the exchange program at appropriate intervals to assess the extent to which the program has met its academic and fiscal goals, the desirability of continuing the program, and whether amendments are advisable.

II. **Authorization and Approval Process**

As required by the “WKU Policy for Developing and Maintaining International Exchange and Cooperative Agreements,” all such agreements that commit WKU resources must be approved by the President or the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. In addition, in most cases, international agreements should be reviewed and approved at the college level and authorized at the campus level by the Office of International Programs and other appropriate officials before the President or the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs signs them. Agreements signed by authorized representatives of WKU and a party or parties abroad represent legally binding contracts.
The following are the usual steps involved in the approval and authorization process for an academic exchange or other cooperative program:

1. WKU faculty or staff members wishing to develop an international agreement should first have preliminary discussions with their department head and dean or appropriate supervising administrators at those levels. The faculty/staff member’s department will assume the responsibilities of the Originating Department and will be listed as such in the university’s registry of international agreements; therefore, it is important for the department head and dean to be kept informed throughout the development process.

2. The person proposing the agreement should then consult with the OIP and complete an Exchange Agreement Worksheet.

3. OIP then assists in the development of a draft agreement. Suggestions will be made regarding campus approval procedures and the most appropriate type of agreement depending on the circumstances.

4. After review of the draft agreement by OIP, the Originating Department presents the document to the respective Dean for his/her approval.

5. The Executive Director of OIP reviews the agreement on WKU’s behalf and recommends it for signing to the Provost and/or President. The Executive Director may include the University Attorney and/or other administrators in the review process.

6. The signed agreement is forwarded to the parties and the original copy is filed within OIP.

OIP will keep signed copies of agreements in a master file and will serve as the repository for all WKU Exchange Agreements. OIP will also maintain an updated list of all Exchange Agreements which will be made available at regular intervals to appropriate University personnel and offices.
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN

____________________________________

AND

WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY, KENTUCKY, USA

PARTNER UNIVERSITY (___) in CITY, COUNTRY and Western Kentucky University (WKU) in Bowling Green, Kentucky, USA, hereby enter into an understanding of mutual cooperation with the purpose of developing academic and cultural exchanges, scientific research projects, and other activities or programs within, but not limited to, the fields of ______________, ______________, ______________. Such programs may include, but are not restricted to:

1. Exchange of faculty members and research scholars;
2. Exchange of students at both undergraduate and graduate levels;
3. Collaborative degree programs and curricular articulations;
4. Exchange of academic materials and information;
5. Joint research activities;
6. Participation in seminars and academic meetings.

___ and WKU shall also include any programs offered at either university that are deemed mutually desirable and reasonable for the development of cooperative activities between the two institutions. However, any specific programs shall be subject to mutual consent, availability of funds, and approval of each university, as articulated in a separate Memorandum of Agreement that may subsequently be negotiated between the two parties. In the development of such programs, the universities will attempt to establish financial and other arrangements that are reciprocal and mutually beneficial.

Both institutions are committed to cooperate at the institutional level, and they may also pursue collaborations at the college and departmental level.

The institutions will appoint primary contacts for communication and execution of this agreement. The contact for WKU shall be the Executive Director of International Programs and for _____ shall be __________________. Any changes to the contact person shall be presented to the partner institution within a reasonable amount of time so as not to hinder the exchange of communications or progress of activities between the two universities.

To assess the results of this agreement, representatives from the two institutions will review and evaluate the exchange agreement once every three (3) years. Any amendment to the original document shall be discussed and agreed upon in writing by both parties prior to the initiation of any particular modification.

This agreement shall go into effect following the date of signing of the last signature, and will remain valid for a period of five years. This agreement shall be renewed only with the written consent of both parties. In the event that the present agreement is not renewed, both parties agree to meet the commitments undertaken during the period in which the agreement remained active, or to make the necessary arrangements with mutual consent.

On behalf of our respective universities and with the authority entrusted to us by virtue of our offices, we hereby execute this Memorandum of Understanding. 

PARTNER UNIVERSITY (___)
For UNIVERSITY NAME:

Name (date)
Title

For Western Kentucky University:

Gary A. Ransdell (date)
President
Appendix C: Proposal Development Worksheet and Routing Form for Approval of International Exchange and Cooperative Agreements

Proposed Partner University or Organization:

Location:

Lead WKU Unit (Department, College, Office, Division):

Lead WKU Point of Contact:

Lead Point of Contact at Proposed Partner:

Existing WKU Partnerships in the Same Country:

Existing WKU Partnerships in the Same Geographic Region:

Primary Purpose(s) of the Proposed Partnership:

- Student Exchange
- Faculty Exchange
- Research Collaboration
- Other: ____________________

Primary Area(s) of Academic Focus for the Proposed Partnership:

Secondary Area(s) of Potential Future Academic Focus:

Academic Alignment with WKU Colleges:

- Arts & Letters
- Science & Engineering
- Business Administration
- Health & Human Services
- Education/Teacher Preparation
- University College
- Honors College

Area(s) of Academic Activity Conducted Primarily in English:
Anticipated Level/Volume/Scope of Activity:

Projected Costs of Activities and Sources of Funding:
Personnel (salaries, stipends, replacement costs)
Fringe Benefits
Tuition
Housing
Meals
Travel
Office Space/Equipment/Facilities
Administrative Expense
Other

Profile of the Proposed Partner University/Organization:
Public/Private:
Year Founded:
Website:
Size: Full-Time UG/Full-Time G
Part-Time UG/Part-Time G
Full-Time Faculty:
Part-Time Faculty:
Accreditation(s)
Ranking(s) and Recognitions:
Areas of Distinctive Academic Strength:
Distinctive Academic Resources (library collections, laboratories, field stations, etc.):
Degrees Offered:
Associate:
Bachelor:
Professional:
Master:
Doctorate:
Annual Operating Budget (all sources):
Library Holdings:
Monographs
Serials
Special Collections
Housing Options for Visiting WKU Students:
Housing Options for Visiting WKU Faculty:

Program Development Timeline:
Initial Contact with Partner:
Initial Discussion with Department/College:
Initial Consultation with OIP:
Initial Discussion with IEC:
Projected Initiation of Activities:
Projected Termination of Activities:
Preliminary Approvals:

Department Head(s):
College IEC Liaison:
College Dean(s):
International Education Council:
Office of International Programs:

Final Approvals (as applicable):

Department Head(s):
College IEC Liaison:
College Dean(s):
Budget Office:
Office of Research & Sponsored Programs:
Legal Affairs:
International Education Council:
Office of International Programs:
Provost/President: