



ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

Principles and Guidelines for Establishing Joint Academic Programs and Campuses Abroad

Preamble

In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, universities have increasingly begun to embrace a new model: rather than requiring scholars and students to travel to the home city of the university they have instead begun to establish new campuses, centers, and programs of their own in other – often distant and often very different – cultures. This profound change in the nature of universities requires a set of principles and guidelines that ensure that academic freedom and the free exchange of ideas, scholarly rigor and excellence, quality education, and the dignified treatment of all people in a university community remain at the center of university values. This document provides guidelines; it is not intended to set binding standards, nor to lay out rules according to which universities agree to be monitored.

Principles and Guidelines for Establishing Joint Academic Programs and Campuses Abroadⁱ

For decades, AAU universities have been establishing faculty and student exchanges, study abroad programs, joint degree programs, and research and scholarly collaborations with universities around the world. In many instances, these successful partnerships, programs, and collaborations have occurred as a result of informal scholar-to-scholar relationships. In other instances, they have been developed and formalized through institutional agreements between AAU universities and foreign universities, often with the involvement of the foreign government. Regardless of the origins of these partnerships, they have proven to be beneficial to students and faculty at AAU universities and our fellow institutions of higher education around the world. The success of existing partnerships will continue to spur even more international academic collaborations between AAU universities and research universities in other countries.

As AAU universities continue to establish new international partnerships, particularly joint academic programs and campuses abroad, it is important for these institutions and their foreign partners to recognize and appreciate each other's core values. For AAU universities respect for academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and human rights, are intrinsic to our core values. Thus, universities should strive to incorporate these values into agreements establishing joint academic programs and/or campuses abroad.

The principles and guidelines below are intended to provide a useful resource to universities. They are not intended to encompass the full range of international activities, but are directed

principally to arrangements involving institutional partnerships concerning the *establishment of joint academic programs and campuses abroad*.

1. Academic Freedom: Academic freedom is the freedom of university faculty members and students to produce and disseminate knowledge through research, teaching and service without undue constraint. When establishing campuses abroad or joint academic programs, agreements between universities and foreign partners should strive to include a commitment to commonly accepted principles of academic freedom. Members of the academic community should be able to ask questions and engage in discussion, and write and publish without the fear of punishment or intrusion by governments or authorities holding public, private, or institutional power. In addition, the academic environment should provide a safe haven where there is a tolerance for different opinions, and a willingness to hear competing views and perspectives. Within this environment, all students, faculty, and staff should have access to the full range of ideas of others, including complete access to information through the Internet.
2. Institutional Autonomy: Universities should maintain the right to set their own priorities based on academic grounds, and to determine what and how they will teach students. These universities, along with their foreign university partners, should also assume the responsibility for developing strategic and operational plans based on those academic priorities, and for determining whom they will hire and admit to the university or academic program.
3. Non-discrimination: For universities, basic human rights are central to our core values. When in an academic environment, no students, faculty, staff, or contracted workers should face discrimination on the basis of age, ethnicity, gender, nationality, race, religion, physical ability, or sexual orientation. In addition, within the academic environment, all students, faculty, and staff should be expected to interact with others on the basis of mutual respect. Disagreements may be expressed vigorously, but they should be expressed with civility and with respect for the freedom of others.
4. Treatment of Workers: Universities establishing and operating campuses abroad should ensure that workers are being compensated appropriately, are working and living in safe and clean environments, and are being treated in accordance with local laws and international norms.
5. Variations in Policy between the University and the Host Country: Agreements with foreign universities, governments, and agencies should be consistent with the institutional policies and academic standards of the university. Should there be variations between the university's policies and the laws and policies of the host country, those differences should be clearly acknowledged. In particular, where there are differences between the freedom of expression expected within the academic environment and in the host country, the university should alert faculty, students and staff to those differences in advance.

ⁱ In preparing these principles and guidelines, AAU consulted the Hefei Statement on the Ten Characteristics of Contemporary Research Universities, the ACE Report "Strength through Global Leadership and Engagement: U.S. Higher Education in the 21st Century," and the AAU Statement on Academic Principles.