

Criteria for Selecting International Partner Institutions

When planning international partnerships, there are several considerations that institutions must address. Below are concerns that should be reviewed when determining the institution and partnership that best match your institution's needs. It might be preferable to use this as a checklist to ensure a well thought out and extensive partnership building plan.

Compatibility & Fit

General institutional compatibility with your institution

- Similar missions
- Similar areas of excellence (building synergy)
- Complementary areas of excellence (filling gaps)

Compatibility with the international goals of your institution

- Will support achievement of your goals in international teaching, research, engagement, institutional advancement
- Fits with the role you have assigned partnerships in your internationalization

Fit with the range of your existing partnerships

- Building on areas of strength
- Filling gaps and not stretching your resources too thinly

Quality and integrity of potential partner

- In terms of accreditation
- In terms of ranking
- In terms of academic programs
- In terms of business and partnership practices

Partner Desirability & Mutual Gain

Partner is in a part of the world of interest to your institution

- Faculty and programs from your institution already have connections with the potential partner
- Building on your strengths or filling your gaps in targeted areas
- Mirroring the international connections of your surrounding community
- Partner is in a nation that is a source of international students for your institution, or a place where your students would like to go
- Partnership will be of mutual benefit to all participating institutions

Maintaining Communication

Productive discussions with the potential partner have taken place

- Trust and rapport have been built
- Mutual understandings (including what partnership means) have been reached
- Common projects and interests have been identified
- All relevant decision-makers have been engaged

- Level of commitment has been determined
- Possible roadblocks and negative impacts have been identified and addressed
- Resources and financial arrangements have been negotiated
- Regulatory issues have been addressed
- Language issues have been addressed

Managing Program Structure

Resources and structures exist to support the partnership over time

- Faculty and departmental buy-in exists
- Funding for travel is available
- Revenue neutral exchange structures are in place
- Course articulations are possible
- System of regular communication can be established
- Each side has a team or office to manage its part of the partnership
- Capacity to provide language instruction, cultural and national framing for work with
- Partner exists (or can be developed)

Proposed partnership has undergone appropriate reviews at your institution

- Following agreed-upon procedures
- Obtaining all necessary approvals
- Discussed by all relevant constituencies
- Reviewed by legal counsel
- System of on-going review and re-evaluation is in place
- Exit strategy is in place

See also:

Van De Water, Jack, Madeleine F. Green, and Kimberly Koch. 2008. *International Partnerships: Guidelines for Colleges and Universities*. American Council on Education.