

 University College of the North Policies & Procedures Manual	# Pages: 4	Policy Number: AC-03-19
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POLICY STATEMENT

The University College of the North (UCN) will establish educational partnership agreements with organizations that will enhance the quality of UCN’s educational offerings and delivery. Such agreements shall not have a negative impact on UCN’s reputation and brand.

This policy will assist UCN decision-makers when developing educational partnership agreements. Educational partnerships are defined as agreements between two (2) or more entities where the outcome has educational benefit.

PURPOSE OF POLICY

This policy outlines the parameters for the establishment, implementation, management, and renewal of formal educational partnerships between UCN and legally established entities separate from UCN. This policy does not apply to situations where an Independent Service Provider Agreement is appropriate.

PRINCIPLES

1. All educational partnerships established will be in support of UCN’s Strategic Direction and the Academic and Research Division Plan.
2. UCN will establish educational partnerships that are mutually beneficial, sustainable, and safeguard the quality, reputation, and brand of UCN and its programs.
3. All requests to establish educational partnerships will be approved through UCN’s Academic Planning Committee.
4. UCN will formalize the partnership through a written agreement.
5. UCN has ultimate responsibility for the quality, academic standards, and student experience of any UCN credential.
6. Such partnerships shall not result in undue pressure on UCN staff or resources.
7. Educational partnership agreements will clarify the roles, rights, and responsibilities of both parties, and will protect UCN and its employees from reasonable liabilities.

8. An educational partnership normally requires a considerable time commitment to develop a successful collaboration. The most successful educational partnerships are those where ongoing dialogue takes place with the proposed partner(s) to develop a common understanding of the respective operating environments and where each partner is fully aware and engaged with their respective roles and responsibilities.
9. UCN reserves the right to refuse any educational partnership proposals.
10. UCN will ensure due diligence when considering new educational partnerships by assessing the suitability of a potential partner prior to entering into an educational partnership agreement.

PROCEDURES

Educational partnership agreements are formalized to provide clarity to all parties involved.

Prior to developing a proposal, the Vice President, Academic and Research (VPAR) should be consulted to discuss the merit of the partnership. After consultation, if the educational partnership is to move forward, a proposal will be developed and submitted to the Academic Planning Committee for approval.

The following procedures will guide the process for the development and approval of educational partnerships:

1. Educational Partnership Proposal

The proposal shall include the following:

- a) The rationale for the proposed partnership;
- b) A determination as to whether the proposed partnership could have an impact on an existing partnership agreement with another organization and vice versa;
- c) A description of how the proposal supports UCN's Strategic Directions and the Academic and Research Division Plan;
- d) The financial impact of the partnership (is the partnership financially sound);
- e) The academic impact of the partnership (is the partnership academically sound);
- f) The ability and capacity of the partner to deliver on the proposed partnership, in terms of staffing, resources, and access to learning opportunities:
 - Does the partner have expertise in the proposed subject area?
 - Does the partner have experience delivering comparable programs at a similar level, or is capable of doing so?
 - Does the partner have an acceptable record of partnership with other institutions?
 - Does the partner have robust quality assurance procedures?
- g) In cases of partnerships with private providers, non-educational or non-academic providers, the following information will be required:
 - Ownership, nature, and financing of the proposed partner.
 - The governance structure (to ensure that the academic and business decision-making is separate).

- h) The risks associated with the partnership;
 - Examples of low-risk partners may be a highly ranked Canadian post-secondary education institution.
 - Examples of high-risk partnerships may include 1) international partners where there is no existing working relationship with UCN, 2) proposals for the delivery of a program at an academic level which the partner has no experience, and 3) types of delivery which are new to UCN.
- i) A description of the quality management processes for the proposed program/partnership;
- j) A description of how the partnership will meet the appropriate academic standards and offer the appropriate learning, teaching, and student experience;
- k) A plan that identifies student supports from recruitment and admission through to completion/graduation;
- l) The safeguards in place to ensure compliance with internal UCN's policies and external regulatory requirements;
- m) The plan for both parties' terminating path of the partnership;
- n) An assessment of the reputation of the partner, including their financial standing with UCN, track record of performance, and integrity of operations:
 - Has the partner been subject to any allegations or convictions for fraud, bribery, or corruption?
 - Is there a reputational risk associated with the partnership (for example, the partner's business and ethical interests, the risk of being unable to deliver the project)?
 - In the case of proposed international partnerships: Are there appropriate measures in place to ensure that there is a joint understanding of the current practices of higher education in each respective country and the capacity to address differences in cultures and expectations to ensure that the requirements of the agreement can be met?

2. Educational Partnership Agreements

Once the proposal is approved, a legal educational partnership agreement (the agreement) will be developed in consultation with the partner and signed by all applicable parties. The agreement template is available from the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer.

The agreement template must be completed; however, it is acknowledged that all articles of the agreement template may not apply for each proposed partnership. The agreement template may be altered to suit the parameters of the proposed partnership. Each educational partnership agreement will vary depending on the nature of the program and the roles, responsibilities, and location of the partner. Considering the educational partnership is legally binding, the agreement may need to be reviewed by UCN's legal services. Until the agreement is finalized and signed by an authorized signatory, the program is not fully approved and students cannot be registered.

The final signed version of the agreement will be held in the Office of the Dean, Associate

Vice-President (AVP), or designate.

3. Review and Monitoring of Educational Partnerships

Educational partnerships are monitored in a range of ways to ensure ongoing quality and standards and to ensure that any issues identified are addressed in the appropriate manner. As outlined in the agreement, programs delivered through a partnership are subject to ongoing assessment and review to identify any particular issues with respect to the partnership and how these issues are/were addressed.

4. Renewal of Educational Partnerships

The renewal of an educational partnership is undertaken by the Dean, AVP, or designate and will normally take place every five (5) years. A renewal can take place earlier if specified in the agreement or if serious issues have been identified with the partnership.

The Dean, AVP, or designate will consider the following criteria in order to make a judgement on whether to recommend renewal of the partnership:

- Whether the rationale for the partnership remains valid.
- Whether the partnership remains aligned with UCN's mission and vision.
- Whether the partner retains appropriate academic and financial status.
- Whether the partnership has met and will continue to meet the appropriate academic standards and offer the appropriate learning, teaching, and student experience.
- Whether the partnership has operated according to the terms outlined in the agreement.

5. Suspension and Termination of Educational Partnerships

In cases where the Dean, AVP, or designate wishes to terminate or suspend the agreement, the VPAR shall be consulted for advice and guidance. The termination procedure is detailed in the agreement.

Related Documents:

Legal Educational Partnership Agreement Template