

Academic Approval and Signatory Authority for Academic Program Agreements

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Policy Type [University](#)

Contact Office

[Executive Vice President and Provost \(Office of the\)](#)

Oversight Executive

[Executive Vice President and Provost](#)

Applies To

Academic Division

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Reason for Policy

The University has established requirements for approval of academic program agreements to (1) provide adequate lead time to process agreements; (2) ensure that agreements advance the mission and priorities of the University; (3) secure approval from the appropriate academic oversight office and, where appropriate, confirm that all other required approvals have been obtained; and (4) secure approval from an authorized signatory of the University.

Definition of Terms

[Academic Program Agreement \(APA\)](#)

Any contract or expression of intent between the University and another institution or organization to establish a joint educational program, a collaborative academic relationship, or a research activity unrelated to approved sponsored research.

[Authorized Signatory](#)

An individual authorized pursuant to the Board of Visitor's Signatory Authority policy to sign contracts with external parties on behalf of the Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia.

Contract

Any agreement between the University and one or more parties for performing, or refraining from performing, some specified act(s) in exchange for a valuable benefit known legally as “consideration.”

Signatory Authority

The legal authority to bind the University (including any school, department, or business unit thereof) in a contract.

Policy Statement

Questions regarding whether a specific activity or type of agreement is covered under this policy or other policies and procedures should be directed to the Financial Operations’ Office.

1. Approvals:

Academic program agreements (APAs) require two types of approval:

- Academic approval, first by the appropriate school dean and then either by the executive vice president and provost (provost) or his/her designee and, in the case of research-related academic program agreements, by the senior vice provost for research (VPR). The review should verify that the APA effectively advances the mission and priorities of the school and University and all commitments and liabilities are approved.

Any APA that is premised upon substantive change(s) to an existing degree program or the establishment of a new degree program at the University may not be executed until the proposed changes/new program have received the necessary approvals (see “[New Degree Program](#)” information available through the provost’s office).

In addition, APAs with institutions or organizations outside the United States require the approval of the vice provost for global affairs and the director of the International Studies Office.

- Administrative and legally binding approval, which is provided either by the provost or, in the case of research-related APAs, the assistant vice president for research administration in the Office of Sponsored Programs. This review considers business issues and ensures applicable laws and contractual terms are addressed. When an APA includes a combination of educational, research, and financial activities, the APA may, in the determination of the provost, the assistant vice president for financial operations, and the assistant vice president for research administration (or their designees), be signed by more than one authorized signatory.

2. Types of Academic Program Agreements:

Any type of APA is a contract and is governed by the policy, [FIN-036: Signatory Authority for Executing University Contracts](#). The following types of APAs governed by this policy (and FIN-036) include, but are not limited to:

- Agreements for the exchange of students or faculty with other institutions of higher education, either in the U.S. or beyond,
- International practicum agreements,

- Study abroad program agreements,
- Domestic or international joint and dual degree program agreements, and
- Memoranda of understanding or memoranda of agreement related to educational or research activities not otherwise exempted below.

3. **Agreements Governed by Other Policies or Procedures:**

The following types of agreements, although related to educational and research activities, are governed by other policies and/or procedures and are therefore exempt from the requirements of this policy:

- Agreements governed by policies and procedures of the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) [contact OSP],
- Sponsored programs non-disclosure agreements [contact OSP],
- Material transfer agreements [contact OSP],
- Procurement contracts [refer to policy [FIN-030: Purchase of Goods and Services](#) or contact Procurement Services],
- Agreements arising from approved service activities [refer to the policy on [University Services and Activities](#) or contact the Financial Operations' Office],
- Agreements for the provision of contracted instruction approved by the executive vice president at provost at rates established by the Board of Visitors [contact the Financial Operations' Office],
- Clinical placement or domestic practicum agreements [contact the Financial Operations' Office],
- Equipment loan agreements [contact Procurement Services or the Financial Operations' Office];
- Art loan agreements (agreements governing the loan of University-owned artwork to outside organizations or the loan of artwork owned by outside agencies to the University) [contact the Financial Operations' Office], and
- Leases of employee time [contact the Financial Operations' Office].

4. **Compliance with Policy:**

Failure to comply with the requirements of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or expulsion in accordance with relevant University policies.

Questions about this policy should be directed to the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost.

Procedures

1. **Initial Contract Review:**

Any individual or department who either has an interest in developing an APA with another institution, or who is approached by another institution expressing such an interest, should notify their Dean's Office immediately. Individuals or departments outside a school should contact the Provost's Office. The Dean's Office will alert the Assistant Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and, if a document has been developed, forward that document for review. The Provost's Office will coordinate with the Financial Operations' Office, the Office of Sponsored Programs, the International Studies Office, and other units, as needed, to ensure that the APA is developed and reviewed in accordance with University policies and procedures.

For APAs involving a combination of educational, research, and financial activities (for example, programs that will involve both the delivery of academic instruction and payment or collection of fees/revenue), the Provost's Office, Financial Operations' Office, and the Office of Sponsored Programs will determine the appropriate signatory authorities as part of the initial review.

Units wishing to develop or execute APAs must allow sufficient time for University review and communication with other parties to the agreement. Unless units are using standard APA templates

approved by the Provost's Office, the time required for review and revision of the APA may be up to six weeks or longer, depending on the complexity of the agreement and the number of involved parties.

2. Academic Approval by the School:

Once the APA has been reviewed and approved by the Provost's Office and other appropriate units, the dean of each school affected by the APA must indicate their approval of the APA and agreement to assume the obligations contained therein by signing the agreement. The Dean's Office of each affected school will also provide a short letter of support explaining the rationale for the University entering into the proposed agreement. Letters of support should be addressed to the Executive Vice President and Provost and must be included with the approved agreement when it is submitted to the Provost's Office for final signature. The APA and cover letter are then submitted to the Assistant Vice Provost for Academic Affairs for final review and routing to the provost for approval. University-wide APA's do not require dean's approval unless the agreement involves a financial or programmatic commitment from a particular school. University-wide APAs are coordinated by the Provost's Office.

3. Academic Approval by the Director of the International Studies Office and the Vice Provost for Global Affairs:

After academic approval by the appropriate dean, an APA that involves an institution or organization outside the United States is then forwarded to the Director of the International Studies Office for their review and approval by the Vice Provost for Global Affairs. The vice provost may indicate his/her approval either by co-signing the APA or providing a cover letter of support addressed to the provost.

4. University Approval:

Copies of all academic approvals and the final APA is then forwarded to the appropriate signatory authorities, as determined during the initial review. The authorized signatory's office will coordinate execution of the agreement in compliance with [FIN-036, Signatory Authority for Executing University Contracts](#) and will distribute one original to each signatory on the APA and electronic copies of the signed agreement to all involved schools/units.

Related Information

[Guidelines for Developing Some Common Types of Academic Program Agreements](#)
[BOV Signatory Authority Policy \(June 15, 2001\)](#)
[FIN-036: Signatory Authority for Executing University Contracts](#)

Major Category [Finance and Business Operations](#)

Next Scheduled Review Thursday, June 27, 2019

Revision History

Updated Links 1/31/22; Added Compliance section 7/19/21; Updated Procedures 5/20/20; Updated Office Names, 7/28/17, Revised 6/27/16.

Applies To Text

Academic Division.

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Approved By Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer

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