



**UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI TRIESTE**

**Education and Research Services Division
Internationalisation Unit
International Relations Service**

Guidelines for the conclusion of international agreements



Contents

Guidelines for the conclusion of international agreements	1
FOREWORD	3
1. COUNTRIES	3
2. CATEGORISATION OF INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS	3
2.1 International university agreements	3
2.2 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)	4
2.3 Executive Protocol (EP)	4
2.4 University agreements	5
2.5 Departmental agreements	5
3. NEW INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS	5
3.1 University agreements	5
3.2 Departmental agreements	6
3.3 MoU/EP and the Erasmus programme	7
4. INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT OUTPUT	7
5. ROLES AND STEPS OF THE APPROVAL PROCEDURE	7
6. MoU AND EP TEMPLATES	8
7. OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF THE AGREEMENTS	9
8. INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS WITH PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS	9
9. RENEWAL OF INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS	9
10. MONITORING AGREEMENT ACTIVITIES	9
11. VERIFICATION	10
12. ARCHIVE AND DISCLOSURE OF AGREEMENTS	10
CONTACTS	10
Annex 1	11



FOREWORD

The internationalisation of the University of Trieste is carried out through both internal activities and activities involving local institutions that aim to strengthen the quality of research, higher education and training. The University endeavours to develop joint activities and encourage the exchange of teaching staff, technical and administrative staff, and students.

With this in mind, the governance of the University of Trieste, including the Rector, Vice-Rector and deputy rectors, has decided to adopt guidelines to standardise and streamline the conclusion of international agreements. The main focus of these guidelines is outputs, regardless of whether the agreements are programmatic or executive, interdisciplinary or specific to a given academic discipline.

International agreements are based on the principle of reciprocity, both in management and scheduled activities.

1. COUNTRIES

The internationalisation strategy of the University of Trieste is based on geographical areas in which the University has scientific, educational or strategic interests.

To this end, **partner countries** are identified, i.e., countries with which the University is already involved in research or educational activities and/or development cooperation.

The University has narrowed this list of partner countries down to a list of **target countries**, on which it strategically concentrates more internationalisation activities, across research, education and development cooperation.

As resources are obviously limited, it is not always possible to guarantee consistently high-quality activities in a very large number of countries. Hence, the need for a reduced list of target countries.

New collaborations with universities and/or institutions located in countries other than the partner countries is possible when there is clear motivation for doing so.

Since the international scenario is constantly evolving and the University's strategic, research and education interests are subject to the evaluation of new opportunities over time, the list of partner and target countries is periodically updated.

The current lists can be found in Annex 1, which is an integral part of these Guidelines.

2. CATEGORISATION OF INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

2.1 International university agreements

International university agreements are signed by the legal representatives of universities and are aimed at regulating specific relations between the contracting parties. Within these agreements, the parties define the terms, scope and conditions of collaboration in the fields of teaching, research and development cooperation.

**Education and Research Services Division
Internationalisation Unit
International Relations Service**

The purpose of these agreements is to establish collaboration with an international partner in order to meet the universities' research and education objectives. These may include but are not limited to: the promotion of academic cooperation; student, lecturer and technical and administrative staff exchanges; the development of joint research activities; collaboration on specific projects.

The University of Trieste's international agreements are divided according to type (memorandum of understanding vs. executive protocol) and according to the level at which they intervene (University agreements vs. departmental agreements).

The University of Trieste drafts memorandums of understanding and executive protocols according to its templates.

2.2 Memorandum of understanding (MoU)

A memorandum of understanding (hereinafter 'MoU') is an international agreement signed between the University of Trieste and another foreign institution. It expresses the political will to cooperate on certain issues and is exclusively programmatic. It formalises the beginning of a new collaboration and therefore has a strategic value.

Essential parts of the MoU are the scope, purpose, scheduled activities, intellectual property, official language, limitation of liability, validity, conclusion, dispute settlement and termination clauses.

The MoU is valid for 6 years and enters into force from the date of the last signature. Upon expiry it may be renewed for a further 6 years, according to the agreements between the parties.

2.3 Executive protocol (EP)

An executive protocol (hereinafter 'EP') implements the programme outlined in the MoU and regulates the activities that the University and/or the departments intend to carry out. The EP regulates the actual collaboration activities.

The EP contains specific information on at least the following points:

1. the academic disciplines in which the two institutions intend to cooperate;
2. the names of the teaching staff members who will act as contacts;
3. the schedule and duration of activities;
4. the type of activities to be carried out;
5. the administrative details of the cooperation;
6. any related financial commitments;
7. the forms of collaboration (e.g., virtual exchange, blended mobility, etc.);
8. insurance coverage.

In the case of student exchanges, EPs must specify that the exchanges will take place within a fee waiver system, i.e. students from the University of Trieste will not be required to pay tuition fees at the host university and students from partner universities will enjoy the same privilege at the University of Trieste.

The duration of an EP cannot exceed that of the MoU from which it derives.

**Education and Research Services Division
Internationalisation Unit
International Relations Service**

2.4 University agreements

University MoUs are policy agreements valid for the entire University.

University MoUs can be implemented through the following EPs:

- a University EP, valid for the entire University;
- a departmental EP, only valid for the department that signs it.

University EPs can only derive from a University MoU and must be proposed by at least two departments.

University MoUs and their related EPs are signed by the Rector.

2.5 Departmental agreements

Departmental MoUs are policy agreements only valid for the department that promotes them.

Departmental MoUs and their related departmental EPs must be signed at the same time.

Departmental EPs regulate the activities that the department intends to carry out.

Departmental MoUs are signed by both the Rector and by the relevant head of department.

Departmental EPs are only signed by the relevant head of department.

3. NEW INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

3.1 University agreements

A new University MoU and related EP or a University EP based on an existing MoU can only be proposed by the University governance or by at least two departments.

In the case of departmental initiative, the proposal is submitted by the department's contact for internationalisation.

The proposal is officially approved during a meeting of the department council and must contain the elements indicated below. The criteria that the University Internationalisation Committee will use to evaluate such proposals are also based on these elements.

- a) Name of the member of teaching staff who has been identified by the relevant department(s) as a contact. Their name will be indicated in the MoU.
- b) Compatibility with the course catalogue and research areas of both the University of Trieste and the partner institution.
- c) The partner institution's inclusion in the three major international rankings (Times Higher Education; QS; ARWU).
- d) Description of the advantages the new agreement will bring to the University.
- e) Schedule, monitoring and evaluation of the activities also at departmental level.
- f) If it is a new EP aimed at joint teaching activities, an indication of the relevant courses offered at the partner university.

The proposing member of teaching staff will have to identify the second department interested in the agreement in the initial phases.

**Education and Research Services Division
Internationalisation Unit
International Relations Service**

Only after this, can the proposal be submitted to the departmental contact for internationalisation, who will have to obtain the preliminary strategic and political opinion of the Deputy Rector for Internationalisation before submitting the document to the department council.

After obtaining a favourable opinion from the Deputy Rector, the departmental contact for internationalisation will submit the proposal to the department council for approval.

The departmental contact for internationalisation will then submit the proposal and the minutes of the meeting of the department council to the International Relations Service using the appropriate request form.

In the meantime, the second department will have to follow the same procedure.

The University Internationalisation Committee will evaluate the proposal and the enclosed documentation on the basis of the criteria set out in these Guidelines.

After the Internationalisation Committee approves the proposal, the MoU is drawn up in accordance with the University's template. The negotiation phase begins with the foreign institution. UniTS International Relations Service only follows these negotiations for University MoUs and EPs and for the departmental MoUs.

The International Relations Service agrees on the final text of the document with the partner university and with any University offices in charge of aspects covered by the agreement.

If the text of the agreement is drawn up in accordance with the University's template, the agreement will not require approval from UniTS academic bodies. Instead, they will simply be informed of the signing of the new agreement at the first appropriate meeting.

However, if the agreement substantially differs from the template, a request must be placed for the opinion of the Surveillance Committee established in accordance with the *'Directives for the establishment and participation in bodies outside the University of Trieste'*. This committee will have to express its opinion on the legal and economic-patrimonial aspects of the agreement.

Following the opinion of the Surveillance Committee and any further analysis by the partner university, the agreement will be submitted to the academic bodies for approval.

3.2 Departmental agreements

The proposal for a departmental MoU is drawn up using the appropriate template and following the same indications given for University MoUs. The proposal is made by the interested department and the final agreement will only be valid for this same department. A departmental EP must be signed together with the relevant departmental MoU. The EP defines and regulates the activities that the department intends to carry out.

Only the negotiation phase of the MoU is coordinated by the International Relations Service.

Departmental EPs are managed directly by the relevant department at all stages and should not deviate from the University EP template. The principle of reciprocity must be always guaranteed.

The proposing department is responsible for all legal and terminological aspects.

Departmental MoUs and EPs may be extended to other interested departments. Before joining a departmental MoU or EP, the joining department must always obtain the favourable opinion of the original department. The International Relations Service must be notified of any extensions to other departments. The name(s) of the contact(s) within the new department(s) involved must also be communicated.



**Education and Research Services Division
Internationalisation Unit
International Relations Service**

3.3 MoU/EP and the Erasmus programme

If an MoU/EP involves an EU member country or an Erasmus programme country, the agreement must include the signing of an *Erasmus+ inter-institutional agreement*.

However, if this is not possible (e.g., for incompatibility of the courses offered by the two universities), the MoU/EP proposal must clearly indicate why.

The signing of any Erasmus+ agreements that may derive from a MoU is coordinated by the International Mobility Service and follows different rules, procedures and timelines from those indicated in these Guidelines.

4. INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT OUTPUT

The purpose of the international agreement is to initiate a joint activity and, as such, the MoU and related EP must aim to establish and regulate a joint activity. This output, by way of example, could include:

- student mobility;
- teacher mobility for teaching and/or research activities;
- mobility of technical and administrative staff;
- joint project(s), such as research, presentation of research projects for funding, conferences, summer/winter school(s), etc.

5. ROLES AND STEPS OF THE APPROVAL PROCEDURE

These are the roles and steps of the approval procedure of a University international agreement.

Contact teacher	This is the member of teaching staff who proposes the new agreement. They are the contact person within their academic discipline. They will be in charge of the negotiation and, once the agreement is signed, of its execution, supervision and possible renewal.
Departmental contact for internationalisation	They oversee the request for a new agreement and for the renewal of an existing agreement involving their department. On the basis of the criteria set out in these Guidelines, they obtain the preliminary opinion of the Deputy Rector for Internationalisation and then submit the proposal to their department council. They send the approved proposal to the International Relations Service.
Department	Upon submission of the agreement proposal by the contact teacher and the departmental contact for internationalisation, the department receives, evaluates and approves the document through its council.
Internationalisation committee	The committee is coordinated by the Deputy Rector for Internationalisation and is composed of departmental contacts for research and/or education depending on the type of agreement proposed. It carries out a strategic and political evaluation of the activities envisaged by the agreement on the



**Education and Research Services Division
Internationalisation Unit
International Relations Service**

	<p>basis of the University policies and the Governance directives. It also examines department proposals, verifying that they comply with the criteria set out in these Guidelines. It therefore authorises the signing of the agreement or its submission to the University academic bodies if the text deviates from the University template.</p> <p>It is appointed on a one-off basis by rectoral decree.</p>
International Relations Service	<p>The Service receives requests for signing and/or renewing University MoUs and EPs and departmental MoUs. It verifies that the requests are complete. In agreement with the Head of the Education and Research Services Division, the International Relations Service assesses the economic sustainability of MoUs and EPs, as well as the administrative impact of the scheduled activities and the number of staff allocated to them.</p> <p>It submits the proposal to the Internationalisation Committee and accordingly negotiates the document with the partner university.</p> <p>When MoUs and/or EPs substantially deviate from the University template, the Service submits the document(s) to the Surveillance Committee and, subsequently, to the academic bodies for approval.</p> <p>It coordinates the negotiation with all the University offices involved, according to the aspects covered by the agreement.</p>
International Mobility Office	<p>The International Mobility Office assesses all aspects related to student mobility and oversees the administrative and economic sustainability aspects of any new Erasmus+ agreements, having consulted with the Head of the Education and Research Services Division.</p>
Surveillance Committee established in accordance with the <i>'Directives for the establishment and participation in bodies outside the University of Trieste'</i> .	<p>It issues mandatory and non-binding opinions on proposals for new University agreements. It assesses any legal, economic and patrimonial aspects of agreements that deviate from the University's template and must be approved by the University's academic bodies.</p>
Academic bodies	<p>They decide on University international agreements that deviate from the University template and simply take note of the conclusion of international agreements that follow the University template.</p>

6. MoU AND EP TEMPLATES

The University of Trieste has adopted a University template for each type of international agreement under its direct management, using terminology that is legally consistent with the standards of international law and practices.

**Education and Research Services Division
Internationalisation Unit
International Relations Service**

The templates are an integral part of these Guidelines. They are approved by the University academic bodies and constitute the international agreement templates adopted by the University of Trieste.

When negotiating with foreign institutions, departments must not substantially deviate from the University templates.

If the foreign party needs to use its own international agreement templates and/or to make additions to the University templates, the University may negotiate different documents, making the necessary and appropriate adaptations to its templates.

7. OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF THE AGREEMENTS

The agreements are written in English and signed in at least two copies, with equal value.

If the regulations in force at the partner institution require additional versions in other languages, the partner institution will be responsible for producing a certified or sworn translation of the text, which corresponds in full to the original English text.

The University of Trieste can also accept an official translation proposed by the partner institution, provided this is accompanied by a formal declaration by its legal representative that the translated text fully corresponds to the English version.

Where possible, agreements will be signed digitally.

8. INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS WITH PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS

Proposals for new agreements with private universities must be accompanied by official documents issued by the competent ministry that demonstrate that the partner institution is legally recognised and accredited in its country.

9. RENEWAL OF INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

No agreement can be automatically renewed.

The request for renewing a University MoU (and related EP) or a departmental MoU should be submitted to the International Relations Service within two months of the expiry of the agreement. The request must contain the reasons for the request and a report on the past activities.

10. MONITORING AGREEMENT ACTIVITIES

The activities carried out by the departments within ongoing international agreements must be monitored so that the University has full knowledge of the activities carried out and so that adequate information can be provided to the Evaluation Unit. Halfway through and at the end of the duration of the agreement, the EP contact teacher will have to submit a brief report on the work carried out to the International Relations Service. This report must be drawn up in accordance with the template



**Education and Research Services Division
Internationalisation Unit
International Relations Service**

provided, highlighting the achievement of objectives and the identification of any necessary improvements.

11. VERIFICATION

Within 18 months of the date of entry into force, these Guidelines will be subject to verification. The University academic bodies may propose and make updates, amendments and/or additions.

12. ARCHIVE AND DISCLOSURE OF AGREEMENTS

All the international agreements signed by the University of Trieste (MoUs and PEs) are registered in the University official register (Titulus)

Costs, taxes and fees related to the agreement documents shall be borne by both parties, each according to its own national regulations.

The international agreements (MoUs and/or EPs) signed by the University of Trieste will be published on the pages dedicated to internationalisation on the University's website, as well as on national and international web platforms. Information shall also be given during the regular meetings with the departmental contacts for internationalisation.

CONTACTS

Deputy Rector for International Relations and Mobility – delegato.internazionale@units.it

International Relations Service – relazioni.internazionali@amm.units.it



**Education and Research Services Division
Internationalisation Unit
International Relations Service**

Annex 1

List of partner countries

Europe

EU countries and European countries participating in the Erasmus+ programme
Albania
Bosnia and Herzegovina
United Kingdom
Serbia
Switzerland

West Asia

Iran
Iraq
Israel
Lebanon
Turkey

Africa

Ethiopia
Kenya
Morocco
Rwanda
South Africa
Tunisia

East and Southeast Asia

China
Japan
Vietnam

Central and South Asia

Armenia
Kazakhstan
India

North America

Canada
USA

Central America

Mexico



**Education and Research Services Division
Internationalisation Unit
International Relations Service**

South America

Argentina
Brazil
Chile
Colombia
Ecuador
Paraguay
Peru
Uruguay

Oceania

Australia

List of target countries

Europe

Albania
United Kingdom
Serbia
Switzerland

West Asia

Israel

Africa

Ethiopia
Kenya
Rwanda

East and Southeast Asia

Vietnam

North America

USA

South America

Brazil
Colombia
Ecuador
Peru