

# DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

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## Administering Degree Programs Abroad

**Category:** Academic Affairs - Operational

**Responsible Department:** Academic Affairs

**Responsible Officer:** Provost

**Effective Date:** 9/8/2015

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### Policy Summary

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In recent years, DePaul University has increased the number of degree programs that it offers abroad. These programs are beneficial because, among other things, they allow DePaul to offer its academic programs to students outside the United States while increasing the internationalization of the DePaul curricula and community. Offering degree programs abroad also raises numerous complex issues (for example academic, financial, and legal issues) and could have a broad impact, financially and in terms of DePaul's reputation. As such, it is necessary for DePaul to employ a coordinated and consistent approach to developing and administering degree programs abroad, while still allowing flexibility to exist at the level of the individual Colleges/Schools and departments where these dynamic new initiatives typically originate.

The objective of this policy is to allow creative development and implementation of degree programs abroad while ensuring academic quality, good student service, efficient processes, and protection of DePaul and its faculty, staff and students from physical, financial, and legal risk.

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### Scope

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This policy applies to deans, faculty, and staff involved in developing and administering degree programs abroad.

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### Policy

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The process for developing and administering a degree program abroad involves three phases: (1) initial proposal; (2) development; (3) implementation. A degree program abroad cannot move into the development phase until the Provost or their designee has approved the initial proposal or has approved deviation from the phases outlined here. A degree program abroad cannot move into the implementation phase until the Provost or their designee has made a final decision that the degree program abroad is fully developed and ready for implementation.

### Definition of "Degree Program Abroad"

A "Degree Program Abroad" is a program in which DePaul offers a course of study to foreign students taking courses in a foreign country that culminates with the students receiving a DePaul degree or certificate in a specific discipline.

The characteristics of specific Degree Programs Abroad vary widely. For example, a Degree Program Abroad may be offered in conjunction with a foreign educational institution or other foreign entity; or DePaul may develop the Degree Program Abroad independently. Additionally, courses in a Degree Program Abroad may be taught by US-based DePaul faculty, local instructors hired directly by DePaul or hired by other entities, or a combination of these approaches. Foreign students may be billed directly for their coursework in a Degree Program Abroad, or the University may establish a contractual third-party billing arrangement with a partner institution in order to bill students. Finally, foreign students enrolled in a Degree Program Abroad may or may not travel to DePaul in Chicago for some of their coursework or to participate in other activities.

Despite this variety, three characteristics define a program as a Degree Program Abroad: (1) the program primarily enrolls foreign students, not US-based students; (2) coursework for the program is primarily offered outside the United States; and, (3) successful completion of the program results in a student receiving a DePaul degree or certificate.

Colleges/Schools and departments who are unsure as to whether the international program they are developing is a Degree Program Abroad, and thus whether this policy applies, should contact the International Programs Office (IPO). (See below for a full explanation of other policies that may apply if the international program is not a Degree Program Abroad, or that might apply in addition to this policy to Degree Programs Abroad).

### **Phases to Develop and Administer a Degree Program Abroad**

Typically, there are three phases to developing and administering a Degree Program Abroad: (1) initial proposal; (2) development; and, (3) implementation. Depending on the circumstances, the development and implementation of some Degree Programs Abroad may follow a process that differs from the process detailed in this policy. All decisions to deviate from the process detailed in this policy are at the discretion of the Provost or their designee.

#### ***Phase 1 - Initial Proposal***

The initial proposal phase is managed by the sponsoring College/School or department. The IPO, the Office of the General Counsel, Financial Affairs, Academic Fiscal Administration and others are available for consultation with the College/School or department on the initial proposal phase.

Colleges/Schools and departments that are considering developing a Degree Program Abroad must first obtain conceptual approval for the Degree Program Abroad from the Dean of the applicable College/School. Once the Dean has approved the concept for the Degree Program Abroad, a representative from the College/School or department will work with the IPO and other offices identified above to develop an initial proposal to submit to the Provost or their designee for approval.

Information to be provided by the sponsoring College/School or department as part of the initial proposal to the Provost or their designee may include:

## **Academic Considerations**

- (1) A description of the academic/learning goals of the Degree Program Abroad and anticipated student outcomes
- (2) An explanation of how the Degree Program Abroad is aligned with University and College/School strategic goals, and a description of anticipated benefits to DePaul, and/or how the program will complement already existing DePaul programs in the region
- (3) A description of any research that has been done related to the competitive advantages of starting the Degree Program Abroad (for example: research regarding demand for the Degree Program Abroad and competition)
- (4) An explanation of the academic content of the Degree Program Abroad and the accreditations necessary to offer this academic content in the designated country (including US-based accreditations such as NCA and College/School-specific accreditations, as well plans to acquire necessary international/in-country accreditations)
- (5) As is University policy, all new curricula must be reviewed and approved by Faculty Council. Any official reviews of new curricula by Faculty Council will be carried out during the development phase.

## **Logistical/Operational Considerations**

- (1) Information about any partners (educational institutions or other entities) with whom the University may be working to offer the Degree Program Abroad, including financial viability and any potential conflicts of interest
- (2) Proposed plans for providing facilities and equipment for the Degree Program Abroad
- (3) Proposed plans for hiring employees or otherwise staffing the Degree Program Abroad
- (4) Estimated expenses and revenue projections for the Degree Program Abroad; and initial outline of the financial processes (billing, collection, payment, and cash management) to be created
- (5) A description of any potential unique risks associated with offering the Degree Program Abroad in the proposed location (including legal risks, financial risks, risks related to particular customs, or risks related to in-country safety as indicated by US Department of State travel warnings or otherwise), and an initial analysis of how these risks might be mitigated

Please see the Degree Program Abroad Initial Proposal Form (Appendix A) for more detail on the information that may be included as part of the initial proposal.

After reviewing the initial proposal, the Provost or their designee will approve the initial proposal, reject the initial proposal, or request more information from the submitting area. Approval of the initial proposal does not necessarily mean that the Degree Program Abroad will ultimately be implemented. Rather, approval of the initial proposal simply indicates that the sponsoring College/School or department may proceed with development.

At this point a Memorandum of Understanding, if it does not already exist, may be negotiated. The process of negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding is initiated and led by the sponsoring College/School or department and coordinated by IPO, in consultation with Financial Affairs, the Office of the General Counsel, Academic Fiscal Administration, and other offices as necessary (for example, Office of Research Services).

## ***Phase 2: Development***

The development phase may begin only once the Provost or their designee has approved the initial proposal for the Degree Program Abroad. During the development phase, a Final Proposal is created in collaboration with the IPO.

The development phase is centered around the academic goals and operational needs of the sponsoring College/ School or department. The IPO will assist the College/School or department with producing the Final Proposal.

The specific topics addressed in the Final Proposal will vary for the development phase of each individual Degree Program Abroad. However, some topics that will typically be addressed are detailed below. For each of these topics, the sponsoring College/School will draft the proposal document in consultation with the IPO and supported by the areas listed.

### **(1) Curricular and Market Analysis**

***Led by sponsoring College/ School or department, and supported by: Academic Fiscal Administration; Financial Affairs; Community, Government, and International Affairs***

- Curriculum: Develop a curriculum. This might be an existing curriculum or a curriculum designed specifically for the Degree Program Abroad. In either case, the curriculum should be tailored for the designated audience and clearly outlined in the proposal.
- Accreditation: Ensure appropriate accreditations (including NCA, College/Program-specific, and local (foreign) requirements for academic recognition.
- Impact on DePaul: Assess the ability of the academic unit to deliver the Program from an academic perspective, as well as the impact of the Program on established Programs and international recruitment.
- Partners: Establish criteria for selecting partners (or validate criteria for having selected partners) and research financial viability of proposed or selected partners.
- Evaluation Criteria: Clearly define measures for success and mechanisms for evaluating progress toward that success.
- Market Analysis: Conduct a market analysis (if not already performed) using appropriate information about the region and the proposed target audience(s) for the Program.
- As University Policy dictates, Faculty Council and appropriate Faculty Council subcommittees (i.e. Committee on Curriculum and Programs) must approve all new curricula.

### **(2) Legal and Risk Management Analysis**

***Led by sponsoring College/ School or department, and supported by: Office of the General Counsel; Risk Management, Financial Affairs***

- Contractual Arrangements: Evaluate the contractual arrangements with partners that are necessary to effectively execute the Program (for example, a Financial & Operational Agreement).
- Local Legal Compliance: Examine what is required to comply with local regulations and laws (including the possibility of forming international legal entities).

- Risk Management: Assess insurance needs; develop risk mitigation plans and emergency procedures; evaluate unique risks such as US Department of State travel warnings, etc.

### **(3) Financial Analysis**

*Led by sponsoring College/ School or department, and supported by: Academic Fiscal Administration, Financial Affairs, Student Financial Accounts*

- Budget: Estimate revenue (funding sources) and expenses (including start-up expenses).
- Tuition: Establish revenue-splits and processes for billing and collection of tuition (either directly from students or through contractual arrangements).
- Financial Processes: Determine payment processes and cash management processes (including invoicing, bank accounts, wire transfer processes, repatriation, legal requirements such as OFAC requirements, etc.)
- Taxation: Address tax issues (including US tax requirements and local taxation/legal presence issues).
- Accounting and Reporting: Address accounting and reporting issues (including US audit requirements and in-country audit requirements).

### **(4) Human Resources and Physical Resources Analysis**

*Led by sponsoring College/ School or department, and supported by: Office of the General Counsel, Financial Affairs, Human Resources, Office of the University Registrar, Student Financial Accounts, Academic Fiscal Administration*

- Human Resources: Assess faculty and staff needs in the US and abroad (including an assessment of how hiring, payment, benefits, and other legal and reporting requirements).
- Student Services: Determine how student services, such as student records maintenance and tracking will be provided.
- Facilities and Equipment: Assess the needs for various facilities and equipment, including technological requirements.

Once the Degree Program Abroad Final Proposal has been fully developed, the Provost or their designee will give final approval for the Degree Program Abroad to be implemented. A Degree Program Abroad may not be implemented (signing contracts, hiring faculty/staff, and enrolling students) until the Provost or their designee confirms that development of the Degree Program Abroad is complete, or near-complete. Please see the Degree Program Abroad Development Approval Form (Appendix B).

All final decisions regarding whether and when a Degree Program Abroad is fully developed and ready to be implemented are at the discretion of the Provost or their designee and, to the extent appropriate, the President.

(Note: Recognizing that time is often of the essence in developing a Degree Program Abroad, the IPO will use its best efforts to coordinate the development of a Degree Program Abroad Final Proposal in a timely-manner. However, Colleges/Schools and departments should note that developing a Degree Program Abroad may take some time to complete, and that, in some cases, the

development process may reveal issues that make implementation of the Degree Program Abroad impractical or impossible.)

### ***Phase 3: Implementation***

A sponsoring College/School or department is responsible for implementing a Degree Program Abroad. The IPO will support the sponsoring College/School or department in its implementation efforts, including coordinating the support of other administrative areas as necessary.

Degree Programs Abroad will be reviewed annually. The sponsoring College/School or department is the primary participant in the review process. Reviews will be initiated and coordinated by the IPO, and the IPO will collaborate with the sponsoring College/School or department in facilitating the review and obtaining input as needed from the Office of the General Counsel, Academic Fiscal Administration, Financial Affairs and others.

Issues to be reviewed as part of the annual review process may include:

- (1) Academic success and on-going relationship to strategic goals, including success of criteria for measuring progress toward intellectual, mission or other factors identified, and success of evaluation processes
- (2) Budget accuracy and financial performance
- (3) Success of relationship with partner (if applicable) (including update on financial viability of partner)
- (4) Success of staffing
- (5) Functionality and success of payment processes (tuition billing and collection, revenue-splits, employee payments, cash management)
- (6) Success of risk mitigation plans and evaluation of any new risks
- (7) Success of student services
- (8) Renewals and updates to accreditations, legal registrations, insurance documents, tax forms, and contracts (including employment contracts)

Please see the Degree Program Abroad Review Form (Appendix C) for more detail on the information collected and evaluated as part of the review process.

Failure to meet program academic or administrative requirements either in the normal course of business or through the review process may, in the discretion of the Dean, the Provost, a designee of either or, to the extent appropriate, the President, result in a Degree Program Abroad being suspended so that further development or review may be conducted. In some cases, issues revealed through the review process may, in the discretion of the Dean, the Provost, a designee of either or, to the extent appropriate, the President, result in a Degree Program Abroad being discontinued.

### **Other Policies**

This policy only addresses the requirements and processes for developing and administering Degree Programs Abroad. This policy does not address the requirements and processes that may be relevant for developing and administering other international programs (such as short-term or long-term study abroad programs, student exchanges, international grants, and international consulting arrangements). Colleges/Schools and departments interested in developing an international program

other than a Degree Program Abroad should contact the IPO for collaborative assistance in developing these other programs.

Colleges/Schools and departments should also be aware that other DePaul policies, in addition to this policy, could apply to the development and administration of a Degree Program Abroad or other international program. For example:

If the Degree Program Abroad involves US students travelling outside the United States, the [Student Travel Policy](#) must be consulted.

If the Degree Program Abroad involves a contract (Memorandum of Understanding), the [Contract Requirements and Procedures](#) policy must be consulted.

If the Degree Program Abroad is externally funded, the [Administration of Externally Funded Grants and Contracts](#) and [Conflict of Interest in Externally Sponsored Projects](#) policies must be consulted.

Colleges/Schools and departments intending to develop and administer a Degree Program Abroad should consult the University Policy & Procedures website or the IPO to ensure that they are considering all relevant policies.

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## **Procedures**

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As detailed above, there are typically three phases to developing and administering a Degree Program Abroad: initial proposal, development, and implementation.

In general, the sponsoring College/School or department is at the center of each phase of the process, and the process is coordinated by the International Programs Office (IPO).

The specific forms that correspond to each of these phases are attached as appendices to this policy. They are:

- Appendix A: Degree Program Abroad Initial Proposal Form
- Appendix B: Degree Program Abroad Development Approval Form
- Appendix C: Degree Program Abroad Review Form

All questions about the phases described in this policy should be directed to the Associate Vice President for International Programs.

Other collaborating areas (see Section VII below) may also develop additional procedures as part of policy implementation. For example, areas developing and administering Degree Programs Abroad should consult the [Stand Alone Academic Cohort Billing, Monitoring, and Financial Reporting Guidelines](#) set forth by the Controller's Office (Financial Accounting Department).

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## **Divisional Collaborations**

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Academic Fiscal Administration  
University Committee on International Programs (UCIP)  
Financial Affairs

Community & Government Relations  
Student Accounts  
Office of the University Registrar  
Risk Management  
Office of the General Counsel  
Human Resources  
Office of Research Services

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## **Contact Information**

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## **Appendices**

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[Appendix A: Degree Program Abroad Initial Proposal Form](#)  
[Appendix B: Degree Program Abroad Development Approval Form](#)  
[Appendix C: Degree Program Abroad Review Form](#)

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## **History/Revisions**

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Origination Date: 9/8/2015  
Last Amended: 4/18/2019