



ACADEMIC AFFAIRS GUIDELINES

Section 2.3	Academic Programs	
Title:	Collaborative and Joint Agreements	
Number (Current Format)	Number (Prior Format)	Date Last Revised
2.3.2.6.A	2.19	08/2023
Reference:		
Related Form(s):		

1. Purpose

The purpose of collaboration among regental institutions is to provide a higher level of service to students and the community while efficiently using system resources. The SDBOR has established a framework within both policy and guideline to encourage institutions to identify collaborative opportunities that will allow for the sharing of faculty resources, expertise, and infrastructure to improve efficiencies and reduce unnecessary duplication. Specifically, Program Productivity¹ policy 4.5 and AAC guideline 4.1 have created exemptions to foster an environment for faculty across institutions to collaborate on common degree programs.

2. Governance

Board of Regents Policy 1.1.1, 1.1.2 and SDCL § 13-49 through § 13-53 provides the authority to govern academic programming. BOR Policy 5:3 authorizes the Board to approve agreements and contracts including Memoranda of Understanding. The System Chief Academic Officer governs the process by which academic curricula and programming receive approval, per AAC Guideline 2.3.2.

The Chief Academic Officer at each participating institution governs the collaborative and joint degree programs with guidance from the designated Institutional Lead and program faculty with the goal of shared curricula, shared opportunities to offer courses, and open, collegial, and civil communication on the collaboration.

¹ Section 4.5 of BOR Policy 2.3.4 establishes the criteria for exemption from the set program productivity metrics, specifically “collaborative programs approved for exemption.” AAC guideline 4.1, Section 5.2.2.2 establishes that degree programs flagged for review for low-graduate production may explore options for degree program consolidation. Section 5.2.2.2 states “two or more institutions may request that similar degree programs be consolidated with a collaborative agreement to maintain equivalent degree programs.” When this coordination occurs and institutions can provide evidence that multi-institution collaboration will meet graduate production thresholds, benchmarks can be achieved by the sum of all graduates at the participating institutions.

3. Definitions

- 3.1.** Collaborative Degree Program is an agreement to offer a collaborative academic program, whereby participation is open to all regental institutions authorized to offer that degree program and who choose to join the collaborative.
- 3.2.** Joint Degree Program is an agreement to offer a joint academic program among institutions, whereby participation is restricted by the member institutions.
- 3.3.** Memorandum of Agreement is a specific agreement specifying the terms of collaborative degree programs.
- 3.4.** Participating Institution refers to regental institutions that are members of the collaborative and/or joint degree program agreements.

4. Academic Program Eligibility

- 4.1.** Institutions participating in a collaborative and/or joint agreement shall offer the same academic program.
 - 4.1.1.** A collaborative or joint agreement may include programs at either the graduate level or undergraduate level but not both.
 - 4.1.2.** Academic credentials, such as certificates, are eligible for collaborative and/or joint agreements.
 - 4.1.3.** Accelerated dual-degrees (for example, 3+1 or 3+2 programs) shall be managed using articulation agreements as described in BOR Policy 2.2.1.

5. Participating Institutions & Institutional Representatives

- 5.1.** Each participating institution will identify a designated institutional representative appointed by the Chief Academic Officer who will be responsible for coordinating activities with other participating institutions pursuant to the terms of this agreement.
 - 5.1.1.** Institutional representatives shall meet to coordinate activities at least once per academic year.
- 5.2.** Participation in a collaborative agreement must be open to any regental institution authorized to offer the degree program in order for the collaborative degree program to be eligible for:
 - 5.2.1.** The summation of program graduates across all participating institutions for program productivity review, per BOR Policy 2.3.4, Section 5.
 - 5.2.2.** Shared external review for new graduate program proposals, per BOR Policy 2.3.1 and AAC Guideline 2.3.2.A.
- 5.3.** Process for the addition of partner institutions:
 - 5.3.1.** Qualified institutions who wish to join an existing collaborative or joint program agreement shall contact the System Chief Academic Officer and the chief academic officer at the participating institutions and they will engage the relevant academic departments.
- 5.4.** Process for exiting or dissolving the collaborative or joint degree program.

5.4.1. Participating institutions may exit the collaborative or joint agreement, upon notification to the System Chief Academic Officer and other partnering institutions. They shall provide one academic year of notice and exit only at the end of an academic year, specifically after the end of the spring semester.

6. Curriculum and Course Delivery

6.1. The program requirements (core courses) shall be the same across all participating institutions.

6.2. The agreement should include a shared curriculum matrix and course rotation schedule. Courses from each participating institution shall be included in the course rotation schedule.

6.2.1. The curriculum matrix and course rotation schedule shall be included as an appendix to the agreement and shall be reviewed by the participating institutions annually.

6.3. Required program courses shall be either offered at each participating institution or use a delivery method that allows all students admitted to the program across all participating institutions the ability to complete the course.

6.3.1. Elective courses should employ delivery methods that accommodate students from each of the participating institutions.

7. Program Assessment and Review

7.1. Institutions participating in collaborative or joint agreements shall identify and assess a common set of program learning outcomes to ensure greater coordination across the shared program.

7.1.1. To ensure comparability, participating institutions will assess each learning outcome using the same instrument and/or method. If appropriate, participating institutions will employ the use of nationally standardized exams.

7.1.2. Participating institutions wishing to change or modify assessment protocols must receive approval from the other institution before implementation.

7.2. Participating institutions agree to a collaborative assessment structure and process where results are exchanged and discussed annually. Unless restricted by external accreditation review cycles, participating institutions will synchronize the program review and program productivity review schedules.

8. Textbook & Instructional Resources

8.1. Consistent with BOR Policy 1.6.1 – Academic Freedom and Responsibility faculty are given academic freedom to select textbooks and instructional materials they deem appropriate for upper-division coursework delivered through the collaborative and joint degree programs.

9. Funding

9.1. Students participating in an academic program governed by a collaborative or joint agreement shall be assessed tuition and fees in accordance with BOR Policy 5.5.

- 9.2. A funding model, subject to Board office approval, shall be included in each collaborative and/or joint agreement.
- 9.3. Unless otherwise specified by the agreement, each participating institution shall manage graduate tuition remission and assistantships in accordance with institutional policy.

10. SDBOR Approval and Review Schedule

- 10.1. The System Chief Academic Officer may consider the following factors when reviewing requests for collaborative and/or joint agreements:
 - 10.1.1. The number of permanent faculty currently employed in the subject area
 - 10.1.2. Existing online courses appropriate for the collaborative or joint degree program
 - 10.1.3. Program productivity, health, strengths, opportunities, and priorities as identified in BOR Policy 2.3.4
 - 10.1.4. Impact on accreditation
- 10.2. Collaborative program agreements shall be posted under AAC Guidelines Section 2.3.2.6.
- 10.3. Changes to the agreement may be made as needed and must be agreed upon by a majority of designated institutional leads. Changes to the agreement will be reviewed by AAC and approved by the System Chief Academic Officer.
- 10.4. Collaborative and Joint Degree Program Agreements will be reviewed by participating institutions and the System Chief Academic Officer at least every six years as part of the program review process.

SOURCE: August 2023.