



**INTERNATIONAL  
RELATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS  
POLICY**

# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS POLICY

## Overview

### Preamble

Unisa is committed to promoting international relations and fostering partnerships with institutions of higher education in accordance with higher education regulatory provisions, aligned with national planning and policy imperatives and consistent with the mission and goals of the University.

In pursuit of coherent, value-adding and strategic international relations and partnerships, there is a need to put in place a regulatory framework that orientates, coordinates and directs all Unisa international activities, partnerships and cooperation. A further need is to prevent duplication and overlap of efforts. Such a framework will seek to harmonise existing policies and practices to ensure an integrated and coordinated approach.

The coherence envisioned is also aimed at ensuring effective and efficient utilisation of resources.

### Definitions

Committee	International Relations and Partnerships Committee
IEASA	International Education Association of South Africa
AU	The African Union
MDGs	Millenium Development Goals
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Council
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
Directorate	The International Relations and Partnerships Directorate, incorporating the Africa Directorate and International Relations
Partners	Institutions that have entered into linkages with Unisa
Partnership	Form of collaboration or cooperation in which parties are equal and have definitive roles
SADC	The Southern African Development Community

**Scope of Application**

This policy applies to all international activities, partnerships and cooperation initiated and/or facilitated by all stakeholders within Unisa including management, academics, support and administrative employees.

---

**Policy Statement**

As a comprehensive dedicated distance education University, Unisa strongly promotes strategic partnerships and cooperation at institutional, organisational and governmental level.

In pursuit of its vision and mission, Unisa seeks to promote open and distance learning internationally, and more specifically, on the African continent. In this way, it contributes towards the reconstruction and development of Africa, promoting networking among African scholars and addresses the knowledge and capacity development needs of Africa.

---

**Change Control**

Any changes or amendments to this policy should be effected in accordance with the policy on Policy/Rule Formulation.

---

**Policy Violation**

Non adherence to this policy will undermine the strategic management of the University and will call for appropriate corrective measures.

---

**Executive Authority**

The authority for international relations and partnerships lies with the Vice-Principal: Strategy, Planning and Partnerships, as delegated by the Principal and Vice-Chancellor. The Vice Principal exercises this authority in consultation with senior officials in the Directorate and with the Principal and Vice Chancellor.

In championing and advocating the internationalisation of Unisa internally and externally, a Committee on International Relations and Partnerships has been established and its terms of reference are attached hereto (See [Annexure "A"](#), International Relations and Partnerships Committee).

---

**1. Guiding**

## **Principles**

Unisa's international relations and partnership endeavours will be guided by the following:

- 1.1 Unisa Vision, Mission and Values,
  - 1.2 Unisa 2015 Agenda for Transformation and any further iteration of its strategic plan, goals and objectives pertaining to international relations and partnerships,
  - 1.3 National and International development imperatives,
  - 1.4 IEASA Code of Ethical Practice in the Provision of Education to International Students by South African Higher Education Institutions,
  - 1.5 AU goals, NEPAD principles and goals, the MDGs and SADC priorities insofar as they intersect with Unisa objectives,
  - 1.6 Relevant International Conventions and Protocols,
  - 1.7 Mutually beneficial partnerships and cooperation,
  - 1.8 Priority for entering into partnerships or cooperation will be given to public higher education institutions.
- 

## **2. Responsibilities**

Overall responsibility for international relations and partnerships, including initiating, facilitating, negotiating, processing, coordinating, implementing, monitoring, evaluating and reporting, rests with the Directorate.

---

### **2.1 Initiating Partnerships and Cooperation**

International partnerships and cooperation may be initiated at any level of the University by any internal Unisa stakeholder. Once initiated, such initiatives should be channelled through the Directorate, following due processes.

---

### **2.2 Negotiating of Partnerships and Cooperation**

The negotiating and processing of international partnerships and cooperation agreements shall be conducted by the Directorate in close consultation with relevant internal Unisa stakeholders and in accordance with applicable policies and procedures.

---

#### **2.2.1 Due Diligence**

The Due Diligence procedure, where required, will be adhered to. (See [Annexure "E"](#), Due Diligence Certificate)

---

## **3. Authority for Approving and Signing of International Partnership and Cooperation Agreements**

The authority for signing of partnership agreements rests with the Principal and Vice-Chancellor. In his absence, the responsibility rests with either the Pro-Vice Chancellor, or Vice Principal: Strategy, Planning and Partnerships. In all instances, the Vice-Principal: Strategy, Planning and Partnerships will have prior scrutiny of such agreements as part of the due diligence process.

In the case of MOU's, because these are not legally binding, they may be signed by duly mandated officials who have consulted the Directorate, and followed necessary procedures.

---

**4.  
Awareness  
Building/  
Internationalisation  
of Campus**

Unisa is an international University and global player that seeks to integrate the international dimension into its spectrum of activities. It is the objective of the Directorate to promote this goal by consistently informing, guiding and engaging the University community and its international partners.

---

**5.  
International  
Marketing**

International marketing activities and initiatives will be facilitated and coordinated by the Directorate in consultation with the Central Marketing Committee, Corporate Communication and Marketing Department and other relevant internal stakeholders (See [Annexure "B"](#), Marketing Strategy for International Relations and Partnerships. These should be read together with the Broad Marketing and Communication Strategy for Unisa).

---

**6.  
Hosting of  
International  
Visitors/  
Delegations**

The University hosts a number of high level visitors and delegations representing governments, institutions of higher education, and international organisations who come for study tours, conferences, seminars, workshops, bilateral consultations and in pursuit of partnerships with Unisa.

While the initial contacts for such visits may originate from various internal stakeholders of the University, the responsibility for coordinating these visits rests with the Directorate. Similarly, exchange programmes and study tours involving foreign academics and students shall be coordinated by the Directorate.

This will be done in close consultation with Unisa colleges, departments, directorates, and potential partners, in accordance with the established guidelines for hosting international visitors. (See [Annexure "C"](#), Guidelines for Hosting International Visitors/Delegations).

---

**7.  
International  
Visits or Missions  
by Unisa Staff**

The Directorate is a resource and custodian of information/intelligence on various countries and makes this available to internal stakeholders through an appropriate technologically enhanced information storage and retrieval system. All Unisa officials undertaking missions abroad are expected to inform the Directorate of their scheduled international visits.

Upon request, the Directorate shall facilitate contacts with South African diplomatic missions and Unisa partners, prior to the officials undertaking their visits. Internal stakeholders may not bypass the Directorate and make direct representations to South African embassies and missions and partners abroad.

Upon return from official visits and missions, all officials will be required within a month of return to share copies of their trip reports with the Directorate.

---

**8.  
International  
Student  
Recruitment and  
Support**

The recruitment of students internationally remains mainly the responsibility of Colleges with the support of Corporate Communication and Marketing (CCM), in consultation with the Directorate.

Together with international partners, Colleges and CCM, the Directorate will facilitate marketing initiatives and recruitment of students.

---

**9.  
International  
Student  
Registration  
and Admissions**

While the evaluation, admission and registration of international students is the responsibility of Colleges and Student administration, no international students shall be denied admission without prior and timely consultation with the Directorate.

International students are entitled to the same rights and privileges as national students, subject to the provisions of national bilateral agreements and protocols. All internal stakeholders are expected to inform themselves appropriately and apply these provisions consistently and fairly.

**10.  
Funding**

Mobilisation of resources for international relations and partnerships shall be the responsibility of appropriately identified internal stakeholders of Unisa in conjunction with its partners.

Before entering into any agreement, Unisa and/or its partners shall identify sources of possible funding.

---

**11.  
Types of  
Agreements**

**11.1  
Memorandum  
of Understanding**

This is a general statement of intent on international partnership or cooperation which usually precedes the Memorandum of Agreement. It is usually not legally binding on either party.

---

**11.2  
Memorandum  
of Agreement**

This is a legally binding agreement which may be preceded by an MOU or signed directly. It outlines the obligations of each of the parties, and detailed terms of the agreement, including exit clauses.

---

**11.3  
Special  
Agreement**

This covers special projects that may include employee and student exchange programmes, tailor-made offerings and programmes, capacity building and development projects and other memoranda of agreement that do not fall under the normal MOU and MOA.

---

**12.  
Forms of possible  
Partnerships and  
Cooperation**

- 12.1 Academic cooperation,
- 12.2 Capacity building for open distance learning,
- 12.3 Specially designed projects,
- 12.4 Staff exchanges,
- 12.5 Student exchanges,
- 12.6 Collaborative research,
- 12.7 Collaboration with international organisations,
- 12.8 Cooperation with and participation in international professional bodies,
- 12.9 Knowledge transfer,
- 12.10 Consortia (i.e. for tendering purposes),
- 12.11 Material development and exchanges, and
- 12.12 Pulling/exchange of resources.

**13.  
Assessment  
of Partners**

The Directorate, in consultation with the relevant internal stakeholders, will undertake prior screening of prospective partners to ascertain their viability.

Prospective partners will also be expected to provide their business plans and other information that may be deemed necessary. (See [Annexure “D”](#): Application for Entering Into Partnerships and Collaborations with Unisa)

---

**14.  
Quality  
Assurance**

The Directorate, in consultation with relevant internal stakeholders and the Quality Assurance and Promotion Directorate will undertake periodic evaluations of existing partnerships and cooperation agreements in line with the Quality Assurance processes of the University and the provisions of the HEQC.

---

**15.  
Implementation  
of Partnership**

Implementation of partnership and cooperation agreements shall take place once all legal, operational, financial, and

**Agreements**

other specified conditions have been fulfilled.

Implementation of partnership and cooperation agreements rests with specifically designated units/departments as stipulated in the agreement. The Directorate will facilitate interaction and coordination between relevant internal and external stakeholders.

---

**16.  
Monitoring of  
Partnership  
Agreements**

The Directorate shall ensure adherence to all provisions of agreements. Monitoring and evaluation will ensure, amongst others: viability, value for money, cost-effectiveness, alignment with the vision, mission and goals of the University, timely notification of impending expiry and that partnerships continue to be mutually beneficial to the University and its partners.

**17.  
Reporting on  
Partnerships**

Annual reports on the status and performance of partnerships shall be submitted to the International Relations and Partnerships Committee via the Vice Principal: Strategy, Planning and Partnerships.

The Vice Principal: Strategy, Planning and Partnerships shall in turn, report to Executive Management and designated statutory committees of the University.

---