

## **Considerations for Establishing New Student Exchange Agreements**

Student exchange promotes internationalization and shared learning across borders, enhancing the student's educational experience. Successful exchanges flourish due to good planning, commitment, academic "fit" and student interest. Departments and faculty should carefully consider the following prior to establishing an exchange agreement. Typically, one or more faculty are involved at the start-up phase to explore and then initiate a student exchange agreement that aims to result in a balanced flow of students to and from the partner institutions. OIE staff are available for guidance and consultation.

- Judge Carnegie Mellon student interest. Will Carnegie Mellon students be interested in the exchange? It is essential to keep a balance between the numbers of students participating in the exchange program. Where there is usually great in-bound interest, outbound interest may be challenging to gauge. Consult with OIE regarding current student interests/trends.
- Curricular "fit." Is there curricular support for the exchange? Will Carnegie Mellon students be able to find courses that fit into their major? Will incoming students be able to get the courses they want/need? Is the partner institution as rigorous, competitive, and prestigious as Carnegie Mellon? If not, Carnegie Mellon students may balk at participating.
- Financial benefit for students. If there is an exchange agreement, students pay Carnegie Mellon tuition. Often our tuition is more expensive. It might be more economical for our students if there is no exchange in place, and our students can directly enroll for study abroad. Note: faculty interest alone is not sufficient if students are not interested.
- Faculty "buy in." Is there faculty/departmental interest in supporting the exchange? Students require faculty support to go abroad. Ample faculty support and encouragement is necessary to carry the exchange agreement through the entire process including the ongoing participation of Carnegie Mellon students in the exchange.
- Competitiveness. Are there already established exchanges in the same country or region? If yes, it may impact the number of Carnegie Mellon participants.
- Ties at various levels of the institutional partners. Are there ties between Carnegie Mellon and the partner institution beyond undergraduate exchange? Extended relationships can help support the relevance and success of the exchange.
- Student services/Policies. What sort of support services does the foreign institution offer students? Do they provide orientation, academic advising, housing, and medical and psychological services? Are the foreign institution's policies compatible with Carnegie Mellon policies?
- Emergency preparedness. Is there comprehensive emergency planning at the partner institution related to national disasters, political instability, pandemic planning, etc.? What mechanisms exist at the home institution for assisting students in time of emergency, and for communicating with Carnegie Mellon contacts and parents?
- Academic calendar/compatibility. What is the academic calendar of the foreign institution? Does it offer the possibility for exchanging students without semesters overlapping?
- Language of instruction. What is the language of instruction? Do Carnegie Mellon students have sufficient language proficiency to make the exchange viable? OIE or Department of Modern Languages can address these questions.
- Exchange balance. It is common that more students are interested in *coming* to study at Carnegie Mellon on exchange than students are interested in *going* on exchange. How will the department promote the exchange? Will the partner institution and/or Carnegie Mellon department provide incentives such as free housing, internship opportunities built into the exchange agreement, or monetary incentives? Some incentives, such as free housing, may be taxable to the students or cause other tax consequences. (Exchange participation is often financially dis-advantageous for our students, and they may prefer other study abroad avenues for financial reasons.)