



## ENGAGING IN INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS: PRINCIPLES AND APPROACHES

International research partners provide University of Toronto faculty members with significant research opportunities.

An *International Research Partner* is defined as an entity (e.g., academic, corporate, government or not-for-profit) that is engaged with the University of Toronto in a research collaboration (which may also include graduate training and/or entrepreneurial opportunities) and that is located outside of Canada. In the case of corporate entities, their headquarters must be located outside of Canada, even if they have a subsidiary or office located in Canada.

Here we offer *principles* when pursuing and considering international partnerships, and for consideration by Faculties/Divisions/etc. and our faculty members as needed. **These principles allow us to be more proactive in determining who will be a strong partner and in addressing potential concerns expressed both internally and externally about our partnerships and relationships.**

For all potential international partnerships, it is advised that the following steps are considered: 1) Know your Potential Partner; 2) Articulate our Interests and Goals; 3) Understand and apply processes; and 4) Seek advice as needed.

### 1. Know your Potential Partner

- Faculty members should fully understand the organization with which they want to partner, including its governance structure, whether it is a private or public organization, and any implications these organizational details may have.
- Faculty members should consider the stature of the organization (e.g., academic rankings overall and by specific subject, impact rankings), including whether their goals and values are similar to those of U of T.
- Faculty members should consider the value add of this partnership to their own work and to U of T and their value add to the partner.
- Faculty members should consider in any collaboration risks to U of T, national interests, national security, intellectual property, reputation, and human rights.
- Faculty members should remember that in some regions and countries there is no distinction between civil and military use applications, such as applying research and underlying technology related to healthcare robotics in military applications as well.

### 2. Articulate Interests and Goals

- Faculty members should articulate clearly their interests and the advantages of partnering with a particular international organization. University stakeholders should also be aware of what the partner's interests are in engaging with U of T.
- Faculty members and the University should make clear in any new partnership our commitment to academic freedom of our faculty, students, and research staff.
- Faculty members should make clear to any partner(s) the rights of their students who may be involved in any research partnerships, especially with regards to partnered research projects. It is paramount that the



academic freedom, and ability to complete the requirements of their graduate work is made clear and protected at all times.

- Faculty members must consider their own commitments and responsibilities to supporting the goals of the partner institution when we enter into a partnership.

### 3. Understand and Apply Required Processes

- Faculty members and U of T should make clear to any partner(s) all policies related to intellectual property and the protection of any new knowledge, information, technologies, and outcomes, including alignment with other relevant U of T policies (e.g., Statement of Institutional Purpose, Publication Policy, Inventions Policy, and Policy on Conflict of Interest).
- Faculty members should consult with OVPI, OVPRISI, their own Deans and Principals, and other necessary offices on existing protocols regarding the development of international research partnerships. It should be noted that faculty members are NOT permitted to sign their own agreements (e.g., MOUs)
- Faculty members should complete all suggested checklists that ensure that all aspects of this document have been considered, and that all potential risks have been considered.

### 4. Seek Advice as Needed

- Faculty members are encouraged to seek advice and work closely with OVPI, OVPRISI, GRO, or any other necessary offices when developing any current or future partnerships with international organizations.
- In cases where there may be concerns such as those noted above, it is recommended that Faculty members hold regular meetings and briefings with their research groups, Chairs, Deans, and representatives from OVPI and OVPRISI about any ongoing partnerships with international organizations.
- Faculty members and U of T, through and GRO and OVPI, should consider working closely with experts in relations with the specific region/country including members of our region-specific PICs, Global Affairs Canada, the Ontario Provincial Government, and Canadian Trade Commissioner Offices. These agencies can advise as appropriate on vetting potential partners before signing agreements.
- Faculty members should ensure that any partnerships with international organizations are in compliance with other research funding that is held (e.g., Tri-Agencies, NIH, NSF, etc.)

### Additional Resources

1. Government of Canada, Ministry of Innovation, Science, and Economic Development (ISED) Scientific Integrity Policy - <https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/icgc.nsf/eng/07669.html>
2. Government of Canada - Safeguarding your research [https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/063.nsf/eng/h\\_97955.html](https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/063.nsf/eng/h_97955.html)
3. Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector. [https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/ed19-0222\\_-\\_int\\_-\\_ufit\\_guidelines\\_acc.pdf](https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/ed19-0222_-_int_-_ufit_guidelines_acc.pdf)
4. Responsible internationalisation: Guidelines for reflection on international academic collaborations - [https://www.stint.se/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/STINT\\_Responsible\\_Internationalisation.pdf](https://www.stint.se/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/STINT_Responsible_Internationalisation.pdf)

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