

Types of Partner Agreements and Impact on AACSB Accreditation

The [AACSB Standards for Business Accreditation](https://www.aacsb.edu/standards) include multiple references to joint and dual degree programs as well as guidance for the treatment of such programs within the context of accreditation. However, there are a multitude of other partner agreements not mentioned in the standards. In the below chart, we have identified and defined various partner agreements of which we are aware. We have also highlighted some key considerations and potential impact on accreditation that each type of partner agreement may have. Ultimately, schools are responsible for aligning with all of the standards and are expected to demonstrate that degree programs are structured and designed to support content coverage, rigor, interactions, and engagement that are normally expected at the particular level of study. In addition, the faculty complement should be sufficient to ensure achievement of all mission activities. The below table should be used as a helpful tool, and if you have any questions, please contact your school’s AACSB accreditation staff liaison. Staff liaison contact information can be found here <https://www.aacsb.edu/accreditation/contact>

Partnership Type	Definition	Impact on Accreditation
Joint Degree	A collaborative program where a student who completes the program receives a single degree from both (all) schools, such as MBA from School A and School B. The single degree might contain the names of both (all) schools or the name of a joint venture	In this case, each school would be required to report on the program and report on all faculty teaching. One table 15.1 dedicated to the degree may be advisable. School A faculty teaching in the degree for School B must meet School B’s criteria. In terms of percent of time devoted to mission, it is the percent of time being devoted to the school under review. With regard to participating and supporting faculty, the school under review is to categorize the partner faculty using the school under review’s definitions of participating and supporting faculty as they apply to the degree in question. Typically, these faculty members (School A faculty being reported on School B) would be Supporting, but there is a possibility of being classified as Participating should the faculty member be participating in committees at School B, for example.

<p><i>Consortium Degree- Joint degree variation</i></p>	<p>A collaborative program whereby students earn one degree from a coalition of two or more schools with the intent of sharing resources, improving finances and educating students. Usually, consortiums are between schools in the same general geographic location, but some result from the melding of virtual campuses.</p>	<p>Each participating school is required to report on the consortium degree. All faculty are included in the table. It is recommended to have one Table 15.1 dedicated to this degree. In some cases, one campus may “own” the degree, and in that instance, only that campus is asked to report on the program.</p>
<p>Dual Degree (or multiple degree)</p>	<p>A collaborative program where a student who completes the program receives multiple degrees from the collaborative schools, such as MBA from School A and MBA from School B.</p>	<p>If the school offers a dual degree with another institution in which courses/credit are shared, the faculty from the partner institution teaching business courses in the curriculum for the home institution’s degree must be included in Tables 15-1 and 15-2. School A faculty teaching in the degree for School B must meet School B’s criteria for faculty qualifications and sufficiency. In terms of percent of time devoted to mission, it is the percent of time being devoted to the school under review. With regard to participating and supporting faculty, the school under review is to categorize the partner faculty using the school under review’s definitions of participating and supporting faculty as they apply to the degree in question. Typically, these faculty members (School A faculty being reported on School B) would be Supporting, but there is a possibility of being classified as Participating should the faculty member be participating in committees at School B, for example.</p> <p>There are cases in which a student will take 2 years at School A and 2 years at School B and</p>

		receive 2 degrees. However, the structure and delivery of each partner's degree is separate and independent- courses in School A's degree do not feed into the credit hours for School B's degree and vice versa. In this case, the partners would not need to report on the partner school's faculty, however the school under review would need to address degree structure, equivalence, and especially normal time-to-degree.
Articulation/Twinning	One school (School A) agrees ex ante to accept courses taken in a given program at another school (School B) towards completion of School A's degree requirements. Upon program completion, the student receives one degree bearing the name of the institution at which he/she completed the degree program (School A).	Typically, students involved in the "pathway" are considered transfer students and may be exempted from courses or entry requirements at the second institution (degree granting institution) as seen in the QED Document on Collaborative Provisions. It should be noted that normally, the majority of learning in traditional business subjects counted towards degree fulfillment is learned through the institution awarding the degree.
Validation	Validation most often operates similarly to an accreditation (endorsement/authentication) of School B's program(s) delivered in the name of School A.	The suggestion is to exclude or even ignore validated degrees when considering the scope of the organization doing the validation.
Franchise	An agreement where School A authorizes School B to deliver its degree program in entirety in School B's location or award the qualification of School A. The qualification bears the name of School A. Franchise agreements typically involve regular	With regard to franchised degrees, universities typically have extensive involvement in the degrees they franchise. They are responsible for the design of the program, the award of the degree, and probably progression and/or expulsion of students. AACSB (per paper from the IAC in 2011) has normally asked for franchised programs to be included in scope,

	oversight by School A during program delivery.	but there are inconsistencies, often due to the “fuzzy” nature of delivery and responsibility. Normally, it is recommended that franchised programs be included in scope for the institution awarding the degree (the franchisor), unless we see a very good reason for them to be excluded (e.g., the program is running out, or forced upon the School by University dictate, etc.). The relevant committee, mentor, and accreditation staff should be consulted in order to make an informed decision. Information to provide the committee includes but is not limited to: who confers the degree, what school is responsible for admissions, who teaches in the degree program, who designs the degree, where and how is the program marketed, etc.
Study Abroad/Exchange	A collaborative agreement where students from one university attend another university for a period of time, such as a semester or year, but their final degree is from their original school. Example: Students from School A go to a semester abroad at School B, but their degree and program are considered to be part of School A.	AACSB does not require faculty involved in such exchanges be reported on in the tables. These types of arrangements are treated as transfers.
Faculty Activity	Faculty activity refers to partnerships and alliances wherein the partner schools have collaborative faculty agreements in any of the following areas: Pedagogical development, events, publications, collaborative research, faculty exchange/visiting faculty, or other faculty activity.	This collaboration may offer possible examples of impact. In addition, there may be an impact to Standard 2 and the impact of the research portfolio. If outcomes rely heavily on the intellectual contributions of faculty members who have primary faculty appointments with other institutions, the school must provide documentation regarding how its relationship

		with the individual faculty members and other institutions supports the success, mission, and intellectual contributions of the school.
Shared Resources	Collaborative agreement including any of the following: Technology platforms for course management and delivery, library resources, or other school resources (not including faculty share or faculty exchange).	The impact on accreditation is limited, however, depending upon the extent of the sharing of resources, a school may need address whether or not it has the technology and library resources to meet the needs of its students.
Non-Degree/Executive Education	A collaborative agreement providing non-degree education. This type of program is collaborative, but students who are enrolled do not receive a degree from the institutions involved. Participants may receive a non-degree certificate or may not depending on the schools' choices.	Such collaborations may offer examples of impact and may influence whether or not the school needs to report on Standard 14.
Transfer Credits	A policy outlined by each individual school whereby a student can transfer a maximum number of credits from School A to obtain a degree from School B. There may not be a formal relationship between School A and School B. School B may set stipulations including but not limited to the number of credit hours that may be transferred, the grades they will accept, and the school from which they will accept transfer credits.	Schools must have process to evaluate transfer credits, support transfer students, and normally the majority of business education must come from the degree granting institution.
Off-shore arrangement- may also be referred to as Fly-In Faculty Degrees	Denotes educational provision leading to an award/degree, in a country other than that of the awarding institution. Typically, the awarding institution provides the majority of teaching and	The school conferring the degree will need to report on the program.

	may use their own or local administrative staff. Off-shore does not include multi-campus provision of the awarding institution whether located in the same or different countries.	
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Other agreements and collaborations to consider

Partnership Type	Definition	Impact on Accreditation
Dual degree within the same university	A dual degree, or double degree, is when a student studies two fields at the same time and receives two separate degrees (one per discipline).	A school would need to address degree structure, equivalence, and normal time-to-degree. A school would not need to report on the faculty teaching in subjects outside of the traditional business disciplines.
Cross registration	Under this type of collaboration, students may earn credit toward their degree (from School A) without payment of additional tuition through satisfactory completion of courses taken on these neighboring institutions.	In this situation, the courses would be treated as transfer courses and the faculty teaching would not be included on the tables. However, the school should have a process for evaluating transfer credits.

FAQs

- Do the faculty at the partner institution need to be included in the institution under review’s AACSB tables?
 - **Depending on the nature of the agreement.** According to Standard 15: “If the school offers a joint and/or dual degree with another institution, the faculty from the partner institution teaching business courses in the curriculum for the home institution’s degree must be included in Tables 15-1 and 15-2.” A joint degree is typically defined as a collaborative program where a student who completes the program receives a single degree from both (all) schools, such as MBA from School A and School B. The single degree might contain the names of both (all) schools or the name of a joint venture. A dual degree is

typically defined as a collaborative program where a student who completes the program receives multiple degrees from the collaborative schools, such as MBA from School A and MBA from School B.

- How “large” or how many students need to be in a cohort to be eligible or to be considered large enough to be added to the tables and report on the faculty of the partner institution.
 - Size of the program is not a determining factor when considering whether or not the partner program should be included when reporting. Schools delivering joint and/or dual degrees, regardless of program enrollment, are expected to include faculty from the partner institution teaching business courses counting toward that degree in their AACSB tables.
- Whose mission is relevant for the % contribution to mission for the partner faculty?
 - The school under review.
- How does the school under review calculate % of time devoted to mission for partner faculty?
 - In terms of percent of time devoted to mission, it is the percent of time being devoted to the school under review. For example, if John Smith is at the partner school and teaching one required course toward the institution under review, then the percent of time devoted to mission would be something less than 100%. For example-
 1. Adjunct faculty member teaches one, 3-hour class in the fall and one, 3 hour class in the spring and has no additional teaching or service responsibilities. Standard teaching load is 4/4 (each course is 3 hours; many people use a 4/4 for non-tenure track faculty calculations). That equates to 24 teaching hours (8 classes x 3 hours each) over the self-study year.
 2. Percent of time devoted to mission is $3/24 = 12.5\%$ per class, so that would be 25% in the table for two classes.
 3. Formula for this method: $\text{\#of credit hours for one class} / \text{total hours for normal teaching load for the year} \times \text{number of classes taught during the self-study year} = \text{percent of time devoted to mission to report in Table 15-1}$
 - To note, if the “partner” is another unit at the institution and the schools has institutional accreditation, the school should determine a uniform way to calculate the faculty member’s percentage of time devoted to mission and apply the calculation consistently.
- In terms of participating and supporting faculty, how does the school under review categorize faculty teaching a dual or joint degree from a partner institution.
 - The school under review is to categorize the partner faculty using the school under review’s definitions of participating and supporting faculty.
- Do AACSB standards allow a school to partner with a non-accredited institution?
 - The AACSB standards do not preclude accredited schools from partnering with non-accredited schools. Standard 11 states: “However, in such joint programmatic efforts, the school must demonstrate the appropriate quality control provisions are included in the cooperative agreements and that these agreements are functioning to ensure high quality and continuous improvement. Such agreements should address and ensure that the joint/partnership programs: demonstrate mission alignment

in the content they offer and the students they serve; have student admission criteria that are consistent for all students admitted by all partner institutions; deploy sufficient and qualified faculty at all partner institutions; and implement curricula management processes, including assurance of learning processes, which function for the entire program, including components delivered by partner or collaborating institutions.”