



## PARTNERSHIPS POLICY

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. The mission of the Botswana Open University (BOU) is “To provide quality education, research and community engagement through open and distance learning solutions.” In order to achieve this mission, the University has adopted the pillar of “Strong collaboration and partnerships” in recognition that engagement with a broad range of local, regional and international bodies can help it to achieve its strategic goals.
- 1.2. BOU’s partnership initiatives will be guided by the University’s vision, mission and strategic plans, and by other relevant national, regional or international conventions and protocols. Its partnerships will emphasise outcomes and quality standards and they will contribute to the University’s reputation and its aspirations for global recognition by 2036.

## **2. DEFINITIONS**

In this Policy the terms below shall have the following meanings:

- 2.1 “Partners” shall refer to organisations, institutions or other entities that have formal partnership agreements with BOU.
- 2.2 “Implementing department” shall refer to the department within BOU that has primary responsibility for implementing an agreement made with a partner.
- 2.3 “Parties” shall refer to organisations, institutions or other entities that have entered into formal negotiations with each other.
- 2.4 “Partnership” shall refer to a formal relationship between BOU and a partner or partners through which they collaborate to achieve specified objectives.

## **3. PURPOSE**

- 3.1. The purpose of this Policy is to provide guidance on the establishment, implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation of the University’s partnerships with other organisations, institutions and entities.
- 3.2. The Policy identifies the principles, procedures and responsibilities for the implementation of partnership initiatives across the University.

## 4. SCOPE

4.1 The Policy applies to academic and professional partnerships that the University has formalised through written documents or instruments that have been duly signed by authorised officers, executed in terms of the University's *Contracts Development, Execution and Management Policy*.

4.2 This Policy does not apply to commercial activities that do not involve the undertaking of academic or professional activities, or to regular service arrangements where the University contracts a third party to provide goods and services.

### 4.3 Types of Partnership

BOU shall commit itself to partnership by way of a Memorandum of Understanding, a Memorandum of Agreement, a License Agreement or an Institutional Membership, in which the nature and scope of the partnership shall be spelled out, as follows:

**4.3.1 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** – This is a general statement of intent to collaborate which is not legally binding.

**4.3.2 Memorandum of Agreement (MoA)** – This is a legally enforceable agreement to undertake specified activities, with itemised budgets and defined financial obligations where appropriate.

**4.3.3 Licence Agreement** – This is a legal contract entered into between BOU and another party wherein the intellectual property owner gives permission to the other party to use their product or intellectual property, either gratis or for a fee.

**4.3.4 Institutional Membership** – This is an agreement by BOU to pay the stipulated membership fee of an organisation and thereby make a commitment to advance the goals of the organisation and participate in its activities.

## **5. POLICY STATEMENT**

5.1 BOU is committed to developing mutually beneficial partnerships which are of strategic relevance for achievement of its institutional mission.

### **5.2 Principles**

In the development and implementation of partnerships, the University shall be guided by the following principles:

- 5.2.1 Alignment with the vision, mission, values and strategic plans of the University
- 5.2.2 Focus on results and impact
- 5.2.3 Joint decision-making and mutual benefit
- 5.2.4 Sustainability and long-term value
- 5.2.5 Protection and enhancement of the University's reputation
- 5.2.6 Maintenance of the University's quality standards
- 5.2.7 Compliance with the University's ethical standards
- 5.2.8 Compliance with legal and regulatory requirements

### **5.3 Areas of Possible Partnership**

The areas of possible partnership shall include but not be limited to:

- 5.3.1 Innovation and knowledge and skills transfer
- 5.3.2 Franchise of programmes
- 5.3.3 Joint academic awards
- 5.3.4 Programme validation
- 5.3.5 Collaborative research
- 5.3.6 Short course and training activities
- 5.3.7 Capacity building
- 5.3.8 Programme material development and exchange
- 5.3.9 Staff and student exchange
- 5.3.10 Institutional membership of professional bodies
- 5.3.11 Shared use of facilities
- 5.3.12 Psycho-social support services

## **6. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

- 6.1. Partnerships as listed in Section 4.3 above may be initiated at any level within the University but must be approved by the Vice Chancellor or a delegated authority.
- 6.2. Possible partnerships shall be initiated through a proposal which outlines the nature and value of the partnership sought and identifies any resource implications. The presentation of the proposal shall

follow the format of the *Partnership Proposal Form* located on the BOU Intranet.

- 6.3. The Office of Partnerships and Internationalisation in conjunction with the potential implementing department shall form a project team for the purposes of negotiating a partnership proposal with another party. The Director, Office of Partnerships and Internationalisation shall chair the project team.
- 6.4. The Office of Partnerships and Internationalisation on behalf of the project team shall make a recommendation to the Deputy Vice Chancellor – Research, Innovation and Partnerships, who shall ensure due diligence and make strategic decisions on the value of the partnership proposal, including evaluating the financial, legal, operational and reputational risks associated with the proposed partnership.
- 6.5. BOU shall, before committing to any agreement with a partner, identify sources of funds for the partnership if necessary, and where cost and/or revenue sharing is agreed, a cost apportionment matrix and/or revenue sharing matrix shall be designed.
- 6.6. An agreement by both parties on a proposed partnership shall lead to the parties entering into a formal agreement, which document or instrument shall be approved by the Office of Legal, Governance and Risk.
- 6.7. Execution of Partnership Agreements shall be done in accordance with the University's *Contracts Development, Execution and Management Policy*.
- 6.8. Termination of a partnership agreement after review shall be guided by the obligations and procedures stipulated in the agreement and shall ensure the University's interests are protected.

## **7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

- 7.1. Existing agreements shall be reviewed periodically by the relevant implementing department in liaison with the Office of Partnerships and Internationalisation, including discussion with partners to consider proposed changes.

- 7.2. The Office of Partnerships and Internationalisation Office shall ensure adherence to all provisions of partnership agreements entered into by BOU.
- 7.3. Implementing departments shall produce reports as required on a periodic basis and submit mandatory annual reports on the status, performance and impact of partnerships using the *Partnership Report Form* on the BOU Intranet.
- 7.4. The Office of Partnerships and Internationalisation shall maintain an updated repository of all partnership agreements and reports on the BOU Intranet.
- 7.5. The Office of Partnerships and Internationalisation shall submit an annual partnerships performance report to Senate in February each year.

## 8 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the Policy are as follows:

- 8.1 Council** – Provides governance oversight of the implementation of the Policy through the consideration of regular reports.
- 8.2 Executive Management** – Ensures accountability and resources for implementation of the Policy.
- 8.3 Senate** – Facilitates and monitors the implementation of the Policy through the annual performance report.
- 8.4 Academic Policy, Programmes and Quality Assurance Committee of Senate** – Oversees the University-wide implementation, risk management and quality assurance of all partnership initiatives undertaken within the framework of the Policy.
- 8.5 Boards of Schools, Departments, Institutes and Centres, and Divisional Management Teams** – Ensure implementation of the Policy within their areas of responsibility.
- 8.6 Implementing Department** – Takes primary responsibility for implementing all activities under the agreement, for financial management where appropriate, for record-keeping, for risk management and regular reporting.

**8.7 Office of Partnerships and Internationalisation** - Has the overall responsibility of coordinating the University's initiatives to establish and maintain strategic, mutually beneficial partnerships. The Office provides the technical support for the implementation of the Policy, including agreement development, partnership management, risk assessment, quality control and the provision of capacity-building. It is responsible for institution-wide reporting.

**8.8 Office of Legal, Governance and Risk** - Approves all partnership documents for signing by the authorised signatory.

## 9 REVIEW

The Policy shall be reviewed every 3 years or earlier as necessary