

# MOU Guide

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) is a written agreement establishing the details of a partnership between individuals or groups. While generally not legally enforceable, MOUs detail a common understanding of a relationship or project, including the responsibilities, actions, and timeline for each actor involved. MOUs are therefore valuable resources for community-university partnerships and should be completed for each Community-Based Learning course or Community-Based Research project. University actors are encouraged to communicate with their community partners to collaboratively create a MOU for each iteration of a community-engaged project or course with which they are affiliated. To ensure full campus support of each partnership, completed MOUs should be shared with the Community-Engaged Learning Program Director at the Center for Social Concerns (dlassen@nd.edu).

MOUs for community-university partnerships generally include the following sections. A template that can be used to guide the creation of new MOUs [can be found here](#).

## **I. Partnership Vision / Purpose**

This section helps the reader understand the motivation behind and context of an agreement. It identifies the groups involved, their common goals, why it is necessary to work together, and why the current moment is the right time to pursue the items listed in the agreement. This section should be a simple explanation of the agreement and why it is necessary. It does not need to include details about past efforts or discuss how the groups reached this level of agreement.

## **II. Commitments of University Actor(s)**

This section identifies in detail the actions, resources, and communication of named Notre Dame actor(s) in relation to the agreement. Not all elements of this section need to be new behaviors--some may pre-date the creation of the agreement. Each element should clearly describe a discrete aspect of the agreement and provide sufficient context to unambiguously signal to all actors the appropriateness of any potential action related to the agreement. Elements should include activity and resources to both complete and celebrate a partnership. Ensure that all listed commitments have the support of all necessary parties (e.g., department chair approval for use of department resources).

## **III. Commitments of Partner Agency**

This section identifies in detail the actions, resources, and communication of named actor(s) from the community in relation to the agreement. Not all elements of this section need to be new behaviors--some may pre-date the creation of the agreement. Each element should clearly

describe a discrete aspect of the agreement and provide sufficient context to unambiguously signal to all actors the appropriateness of any potential action related to the agreement. Elements should include activity and resources to both complete and celebrate a partnership. Ensure that all listed commitments have the support of all necessary parties (e.g., executive director approval for use of organizational resources).

#### **IV. Length of Agreement**

This section identifies the period of time during which the elements of the agreement will be active and enforceable. Procedures for modifying the agreement while it is active should also be described in detail here.

#### **V. Principal Liaisons**

One or more individuals from both the university and community partner(s) involved in the agreement should be identified in this section. Principal liaisons will regularly communicate with one another about the project(s) detailed in the agreement. Communication required by the agreement should include all principal liaisons. The name, title, and contact information for each principal liaison is listed in this section.

#### **VI. General Provisions**

This section includes all statements, policies, and procedures directly related to the activities described in the agreement that have not been included in previous sections. This may include matters related to liability, organizational authorization, potential student/staff disciplinary practices, and more. Ensure that all listed commitments have the support of all necessary parties and that all listed commitments are consistent with the relevant partner's existing policies.

#### **VII. Signatures**

The MOU should be signed by representatives from all groups involved. Ensure that all listed signatories have the appropriate position within their organization or unit to make an agreement on their behalf. Depending on the scope and nature of the activities listed, MOUs may need to be signed by either department or college administrators. Consult with your home unit to determine who should sign an agreement. Note that MOUs which include the transmission of funds may require additional signatories.