

# Policy and Procedure Guidelines for International Agreements at Ohio University

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# Policy and Procedure Guidelines for International Agreements at Ohio University

## Introduction

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Global education is an important strategic priority of Ohio University (OHIO). As indicated in [OHIO's Strategic Initiatives](#) as well as the [Global Strategy](#), OHIO recognizes that international collaborations and cooperation with partner institutions provide invaluable opportunities for students, faculty, and the institution itself. Specifically, several goals identified in OHIO's Strategic Initiatives attest to the importance of global education, research and partnerships. Those goals are:

- Develop a rapid-response model for identifying and securing partnerships with community and global partners to address their challenges and extend our engagement ecosystem
- Support research-funded positions that are strategically aligned to existing strengths, opportunities, and community and global needs
- Prepare students with distinctive skills such as communication, critical thinking, and leadership that are highly valued by employers and central to lifelong learning in a globally connected world; and
- Expand partnerships with corporations and global partners who share our vision for building more vibrant, inclusive communities in ways that will yield national prominence.

At OHIO, numerous agreements are signed every year with various scope in partnership intent and activities. Overall, OHIO strives that international agreements be proposed only in those instances where there is a demonstrated intent or commitment of the involved parties to initiate and implement programs. The aim is to enter into agreements that result in substantive activities.

International agreements between OHIO and partner universities are governed and coordinated by a combination of the University International Council (UIC), the Office of Global Affairs (OGA), the Office of Legal Affairs, the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost, and the Office of the President. The following guidelines and procedures are provided to assist OHIO in developing and implementing international partnership agreements. These agreements can involve student exchanges, faculty/staff exchange, collaborative research, observations (clinical), and other activities with organizations and higher education institutions around the world.

The guidelines provide a policy and process that:

- Achieves uniformity and consistency in developing, processing, and implementing international partnership agreements;
- Provides templates and sample documents; and
- Increases the timely and efficient processing of international partnership agreements.

## Types of International Agreements at OHIO

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The following is a list of the most frequently used agreements. There might be times when a plan for a collaborative project does not fit into any of the pre-approved templates. In addition, if the intent of the proposed agreement is not captured by OHIO's templates or if the partner institution has a required format for agreements, it is possible to develop an agreement different from the template. All agreements will go to the Office of Legal Affairs for review as part of the internal approval process. Contact the Office of Global Affairs ([globalaffairs@ohio.edu](mailto:globalaffairs@ohio.edu)) to discuss options.

### Agreements Managed by UIC/Global Agreement Review Committee (GARC)

The Global Agreement Review Committee (GARC), a UIC subcommittee, serves to review and process all types of agreements on behalf of the university. GARC determines whether the proposed agreement integrates, represents, and supports the global strategy goals and best interests of the University.

#### Letter of Intent (LOI)

A Letter of Intent (LOI) is a non-binding document that allows an OHIO academic or administrative unit to establish that there is sufficient interest to pursue collaboration in the future or continue exploratory discussions and consultations between an academic or administrative unit at OHIO and one or more partner universities. These are usually very general and serve as an agreement to start discussions and identify future endeavors. Typically, a LOI could be developed at the conclusion of a first visit or following an initial series of discussions. Under the LOI, the academic or administrative units are able to run a one-time or small-scale pilot program. The LOI does not require the signature of the University President. The LOI should be signed by the Unit Head(s) (i.e., dean, chair, or director) and the Vice Provost for Global Affairs and International Studies (VPGAIS).

#### Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a non-binding institutional acknowledgement of intent to cooperate and explore collaborative activities between OHIO and a partner institution. An MOU is designed to show that there are specific university-wide intentions made by both institutions that are mutually beneficial, necessary and consistent with the strategic plan. MOUs are institution-wide and formally recognized. An MOU is signed by the University President.

#### Activity Agreement (AA)

An Activity Agreement is a legally binding contract that commits OHIO and the partner institution(s) to provide specific services or activities. An MOU is executed before the process of negotiation and the development of an Activity Agreement. An Activity Agreement outlines the details of the specific collaborative programs and projects. It is created by an academic or administrative unit at OHIO. Activity Agreements are executed with partner institutions for programs or projects, such as faculty exchange, research collaboration, non-degree visiting student/faculty program, conferences, and other collaborations. Individual separate agreements will be executed for double degrees and student exchanges. All Activity Agreements are reviewed by the Office of Legal Affairs. The Activity Agreements should be signed by the Unit Head(s) and VPGAIS, except in cases where partner protocol dictates approval at a higher level on behalf of the institution. Agreements may be adjusted according to GARC's recommendations.

Items to address when planning an activity agreement include, but are not limited to:

- Health insurance
- Admissions procedures
- Visa requirements

- Transfer of credit and enrollment processes
- Academic appointments of visiting faculty and students
- Access to financial support (internal and external sources of support, resources available at the partner institution, etc.)
- Language requirements and testing
- Intellectual property
- Other procedural and institutional considerations

### Reciprocal Student Exchange Agreement (RSEA)

A Reciprocal Student Exchange Agreement is used when OHIO and a partner institution of similar academic standing agree to a formal exchange of students at the undergraduate and/or graduate level. This agreement outlines the responsibilities of the institutions as well as the responsibilities of the students. Students enroll at and pay tuition and fees to their home institutions while studying at the host institution(s). Since instructional fees are covered for incoming students and collected from outbound students, it is expected that the total number of incoming semesters be reciprocal to the number of outbound semesters over a mutually agreed number of years. A RSEA is signed by the President.

### Dual/Double/Joint Degree Agreement (DDA)

A Dual/Double/Joint Degree Agreement is used when OHIO and a partner institution of similar academic standing agree to a formal collaborative degree program (either undergraduate or graduate). The terms such as “dual degree”, “double degree”, or “joint degree” are used differently by different institutions without a clear consensus on the definition among US institutions. OHIO follows the definitions offered by the Council of Graduate Schools<sup>1</sup> as below:

- **Dual or Double Degree Program:** Students study at two or more institutions and upon completion of the program receive a separate diploma from each of the participating institutions.
- **Joint Degree Program:** Students study at two or more institutions and upon completion of the program receive a single diploma representing work completed at two or more institutions. (This diploma may be “double-sealed” or “double-badged,” containing names and official seals of all institutions in the international collaborative arrangement, or may be issued by the home institution, with that institution’s seal only and accompanied by a transcript, certificate, or other document indicating the student’s participation in the international collaborative program.)

A DDA outlines the responsibilities of the institutions as well as the responsibilities of the students and is signed by the President.

## Agreements Managed by Other Units and Not Under GARC’s Purview

### Study Abroad

Study Abroad and Domestic Study Away Program Proposal review and approvals are managed by the Study Away Committee (SAC), a subcommittee of the UIC. If you are interested in developing a study abroad program, please refer to the information available at [www.ohio.edu/goglobal/faculty-staff/process-overview](http://www.ohio.edu/goglobal/faculty-staff/process-overview) or contact [global.opportunities@ohio.edu](mailto:global.opportunities@ohio.edu).

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<sup>1</sup> Council of Graduate Schools (2010). *Joint Degrees, Dual Degrees, and International Research Collaborations: A Report on the CGS Graduate International Collaborations Project*. [https://cgsnet.org/publication-pdf/2517/joint\\_degrees\\_dual\\_degrees\\_and\\_international\\_research.pdf](https://cgsnet.org/publication-pdf/2517/joint_degrees_dual_degrees_and_international_research.pdf)

## Service Contracts

A service contract is utilized when a department or faculty member is providing services to an external party for payment. There is not an assumption of ongoing relations and the work is deemed 'work for hire' with no registered students. An example for a service contract is a faculty member being paid to provide training for a group of instructors at another university. It will not be ongoing nor is there an assumption of a continuing relationship once the work is complete. For these types of documents, GARC does not need to be involved.

If there are registered students either in non-degree or degree programs included in a Service Contract, GARC must be involved to review and approve the necessary policy and procedure (such as FERPA requirement).

## Sponsored Research Agreements and Non-Disclosure Agreements

Sponsored Research Agreements and Non-Disclosure Agreements are managed by the Office of the Vice President for Research and Creative Activity. If you have a question about sponsored research agreements and other contractual documents related to acceptance of external funding, contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) Service Center at 740-597-6777. For Non-Disclosure Agreements also known as NDAs, MDA's and Confidentiality Agreements, contact the Technology Transfer Office at [silvajr@ohio.edu](mailto:silvajr@ohio.edu).

## International Agreement Procedures

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The general procedures for creating a collaborative international agreement at OHIO are as follows. An OHIO department, program or individual seeking to formalize collaboration with an international partner must consult with appropriate administrators in their academic or administrative unit and with the Office of Global Affairs (OGA). The templates for a general LOI, MOU, AA, and RSEA are available [online](#) and by request from OGA. These agreements must be approved by GARC on behalf of UIC.

## Exploration and Initial Considerations

1. **Initial Contact and Partnership Exploration:** In most instances, initial contact is made between individual faculty and/or administrators at OHIO and the partner institution. The faculty or administrative lead is responsible for maintaining contact with the partner institution and overseeing collaborative activities. General discussions focusing on the goals and objectives of potential activities are usually held at this stage. It is essential to evaluate whether Ohio University and the partner institution are a good fit. Below are some guiding questions that can help to develop a strong and sustainable collaboration:
  - a. What value does the partnership provide to both institutions? Is there a demonstrated history of activity? Is a wide range of activities anticipated, such as student mobility, research collaboration(s), faculty mobility, and academic programs?
  - b. Is this institution going to be a suitable partner for Ohio University? Do both institutions have the capacity to launch and contribute to the partnership?
  - c. Will a partnership with this institution have sufficient appeal to attract participation from OHIO students and faculty? What shared/complementary outcomes/goals/visions do the partner institutions have?
  - d. Will there be further specific activity agreements?
  - e. What are the potential risks?

2. **Internal Discussion:** The faculty or administrative lead should consult with his/her unit, department, and college to ensure support and approval by the appropriate Unit Heads. It is helpful to outline the programmatic scope of work and goals of both institutions. The scope of work should set forth the requirements of the proposed program with clear and strategic goals to be accomplished during the time period of the partnership/agreement(s). Both short and long-term goals and objectives should be considered. The following questions can be considered:
  - a. What is envisioned programmatically? For example: faculty exchanges, student exchanges, delivery of workshops or a training program, or a focused research project?
  - b. Is this institutional relationship necessary and consistent with unit goals, as well as, aligned with [OHIO's Strategic Initiatives](#) and [Global Strategy](#)?
  - c. How does the proposed activity contribute to the teaching, research, and outreach mission of OHIO?
  - d. What will be the appeal to OHIO students and faculty and to those from the partner institution?
  - e. What kind of resources will be required? Will there be external funding available?

## Routing

1. **Submit [Global Cooperation Agreement Proposal \(GCAP\)](#):** To begin the process, the faculty or administrative lead completes and submits a signed GCAP to the Office of Global Affairs (OGA) at [globalaffairs@ohio.edu](mailto:globalaffairs@ohio.edu). The GCAP provides the foundation for the formal review and approval process for proposed international agreements. The form must be completed and approved before any faculty member or college makes a commitment to establish an international agreement with a partner institution. The GCAP should be drafted in cooperation with the partner institution.
2. **Review of GCAP:** The GARC reviews the GCAP from an institutional perspective to: 1) examine how the proposed agreement will directly contribute to the global strategy and priorities of the university; 2) identify any similar agreements; and 3) determine the proper agreement type (LOI, MOU, AA, RSEA, or DDA). GARC meets regularly to review the proposed GCAP and agreements. The time to review each proposal varies. Allow sufficient time for review and follow up for each international agreement request. Last-minute requests for expedited or immediate approval will not be guaranteed. Contact OGA at [globalaffairs@ohio.edu](mailto:globalaffairs@ohio.edu) to check the status of the pending proposal.
3. **Submit Draft LOI/MOU/AA/RSEA/DDA:** Once a GCAP is approved, OGA will provide an [agreement template](#) for the faculty or administrative lead to complete and submit back to OGA. OHIO and the partner institution must agree on all terms of the Agreement.
4. **Review and Approval of Agreement:** The GARC will review the draft agreement and forward it to the next appropriate reviewers (e.g., special reviews). See Table 1 for the reviewers and signatories based on the type of documents. The processing time for internal review and routing varies for each document type. Allow sufficient time to complete the process.
  - a. **Special Reviews**
    - i. **Curricular Review and Approval:** If the program proposes to create a new course and/or program, it will be consulted with the appropriate curriculum approval committee.
    - ii. **Research Review and Approval:** The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) will review all Activity Agreement drafts that involve any research activities. Those agreements should satisfy the requirements set by ORSP before they are fully approved by GARC.

TABLE 1. Document Types, Purpose, Routing for Review and Approval, and signatory

Document Type	Purpose/Nature	Review Routing	Signatory
Global Cooperation Agreement Proposal (GCAP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal document initiating review process</li> <li>Required for all new/existing relationships</li> <li>GARC determines agreement type</li> </ul>	Intra-Unit GARC	Faculty or Administrative Lead Unit Head(s)
Letter of Intent (LOI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unit-to-Unit General Agreements</li> <li>One-time or pilot program to explore possibilities</li> <li>May involve more than one college and/or interdisciplinary program</li> </ul>	Intra-Unit GARC	Unit Head(s) VPGAIS
Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>University-to-University General Agreement</li> <li>General statement of cooperation between OHIO and partner institution(s)</li> </ul>	Intra-Unit GARC Legal Affairs EVPP	President
Activity Agreement (AA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>University-to-University or Unit-to-Unit Activity Agreement(s)</li> <li>Outlines details of specific collaborations and projects</li> </ul>	Intra-Unit GARC Legal Affairs	Unit Head(s) VPGAIS
Reciprocal Student Exchange Agreement (RSEA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>University-to-University or Unit-to-Unit Student Exchange Agreements</li> </ul>	Intra-Unit GARC Legal Affairs EVPP	President
Dual/Double/Joint Degree Agreement (DDA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>University-to-University or Unit-to-Unit Dual/Double/Joint Degree Agreement</li> </ul>	Intra-Unit GARC Legal Affairs EVPP	President

## Signing

1. **Print Finalized Agreement:** As soon as the agreement has been finalized and approved by the appropriate OHIO and partner-institution authorities, the Office of Global Affairs (OGA) will prepare an original agreement in duplicate for signature(s).
2. **Obtain Signatures:** OGA will secure the signature of the appropriate authorities at OHIO (President, Unit Head(s), VPGAIS, etc.) on both original agreements. OGA will send the signed agreement in duplicate by mail to the partner institution for signature. Once the partner institution has signed the duplicate original agreements, it should keep one copy for its records and return another to OGA. If there will be a formal signing ceremony, the OGA should be contacted so that the event can be coordinated with the Office of the President in accordance with OHIO protocol.
3. **Distribute Signed Agreements:** OGA will retain the original fully signed agreement for university files and send copies to the related academic or administrative unit at OHIO. OGA will ensure that any interested party receives an electronic copy of all international collaboration agreements it processes. OGA serves as the official repository for all international agreements and maintains an electronic log of all documents.

## Ongoing Management

It is important that the responsible OHIO units manage each international partnership carefully. Each unit will clarify who is responsible for the operational components including project management, maintaining correspondence, allocation of funds, orientation of participants, etc. Furthermore, each unit will also maintain precise contact information for those responsible for program implementation domestically and abroad. Appropriate OHIO administrators (Unit Heads and VPGAIS) should be consulted if any difficulties arise during the implementation of a program.

1. **Review of Existing Agreements:** It is recommended that the review process be initiated at least **six (6) months** prior to expiration of the agreement to allow sufficient time to negotiate renewal, amendment, or termination of the agreement.
2. **Renewal of Agreements:** To renew an agreement at the end of its term (usually five years), the faculty or administrative lead must demonstrate how the partnership has served the interests of both universities and enhanced the universities' global strategic goals. The [Global Cooperation Agreement Proposal \(GCAP\)](#) should be resubmitted highlighting the activities, resources, and outcomes of the original agreement and the short and long-term goals of the renewal agreement. Any changes or new developments in the relationship must be noted in the evaluation. In considering renewal of an agreement, the parties should assess effectiveness and progress toward achieving the objectives of the original agreement. Only active, vibrant agreements that are achieving stated objectives and have concrete plans for future collaboration should be continued. The process for renewal follows the same procedure as that for establishing a new agreement.
3. **Amendment of Agreements:** Amending agreements must be a mutual decision. The GARC, in coordination with the Office of Global Affairs and the sponsoring unit, will facilitate agreement amendments in writing. To request amendment, please email OGA at [globalaffairs@ohio.edu](mailto:globalaffairs@ohio.edu).
4. **Termination of Agreements:** All agreements must contain a termination clause giving either party the right to terminate the agreement within a specified time period. The agreements should also specify the process by which programs will be ended with the least amount of disruption in the event of a termination. The Faculty or Administrative lead should complete and submit the [Global Cooperation Agreement Termination Request Form](#) to start the termination process.

## Special Considerations

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### Language of Agreement

OHIO does not normally execute contractual agreements in both English and foreign languages unless approved by the Office of Legal Affairs. Based on the risks associated with inaccurate translations of legal and non-legal concepts, the English version executed by both parties will be the legally binding and formal agreement between the parties. Any party that contracts with the University may translate the English version into another language for its own internal purposes.

### Duration

International agreements are normally valid for five (5) years. Therefore, the long-term sustainment of college resources and faculty involvement is an important consideration.



# Roles and Responsibilities

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## Faculty or Administrative Lead

The faculty or administrative lead is responsible for initiating and maintaining contact with the partner institution, overseeing collaborative activities, and reporting data for performance metrics. Overall, this individual serves as the “steward” of the relationship.

## Unit Heads (Chair/Dean/Director)

Unit Heads (e.g. department chairs, college deans, and school/program directors) ensure that the proposed partnership is aligned with their units’ strategic goals and interests. They should make sure that they have the necessary resources (e.g., staffing, funding, etc.) to produce the intended outcomes. The Unit Heads will sign any LOI or AA.

## University International Council (UIC)/Global Agreement Review Committee (GARC)

The UIC oversees the development and implementation of international agreements to support OHIO’s faculty, staff, and students in collaborating with their counterparts worldwide. The UIC also evaluates the partnership relationships. GARC, one of UIC’s subcommittees, serves to review and process all types of agreements on behalf of the university. GARC determines whether the proposed agreement integrates, represents, and supports the global strategy goals and best interests of the University.

## Office of Global Affairs (OGA)

OGA provides advice and assistance for exploring new international partners in terms of locations, types of programs, and OHIO priorities and processes. OGA also provides logistical support and assistance in drafting the formal agreement that covers the specific terms and conditions based on the type of program, scope of work, and budget. The faculty or administrative lead is encouraged to consult OGA as needed. OGA routes all international agreements for internal review and approval from appropriate OHIO offices. OGA also archives the hard copies of all approved formal partnerships.

## Vice Provost for Global Affairs and International Studies (VPGAIS)

VPGAIS oversees all agreements and reviews and signs the LOI and AA.

## Office of Executive Vice President and Provost (EVPP)

EVPP reviews and recommends the MOU, RSEA, and DDA for signature.

## Office of President

The President reviews and signs the MOU, RSEA, and DDA.

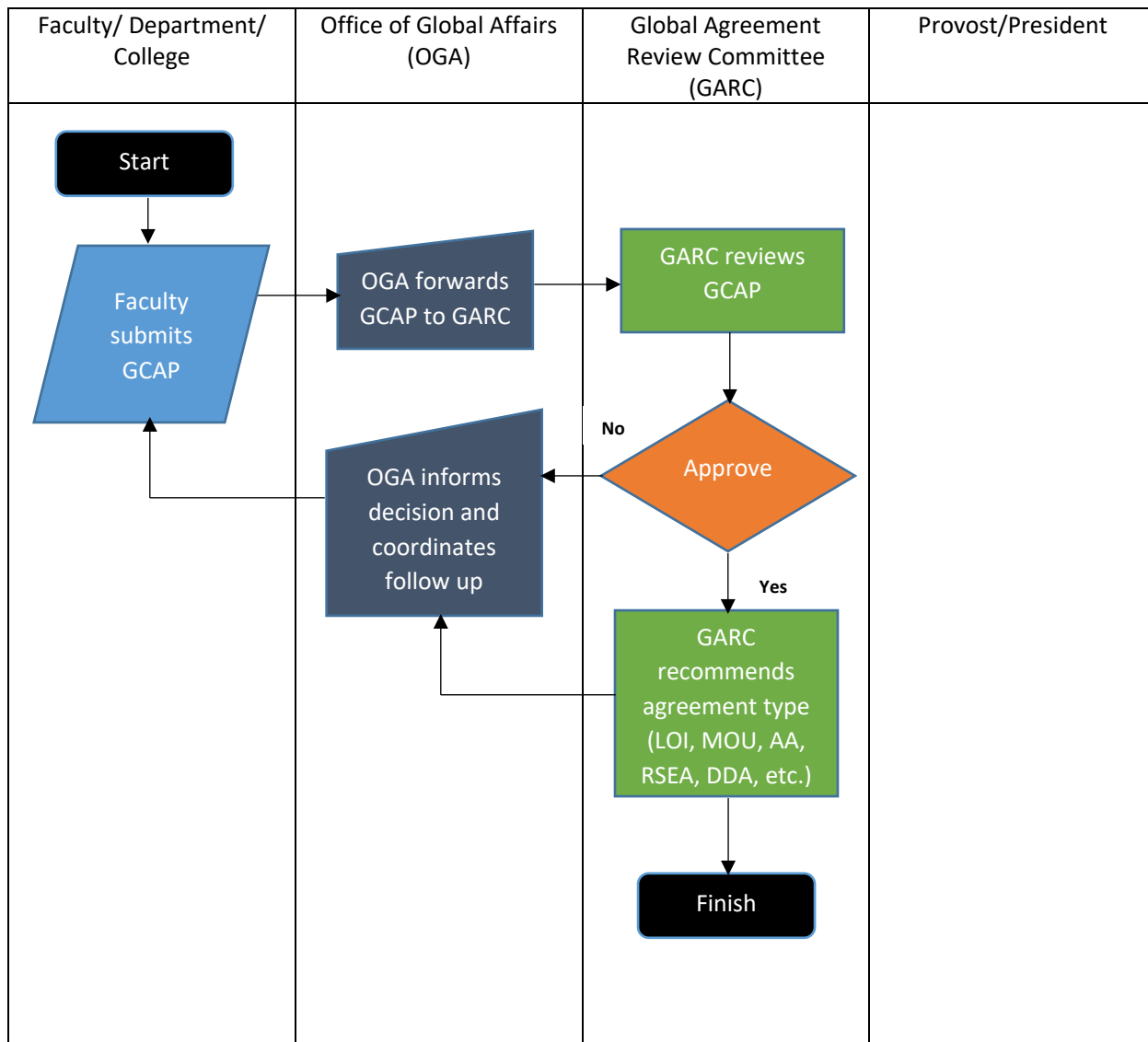
## Appendix A. Glossary

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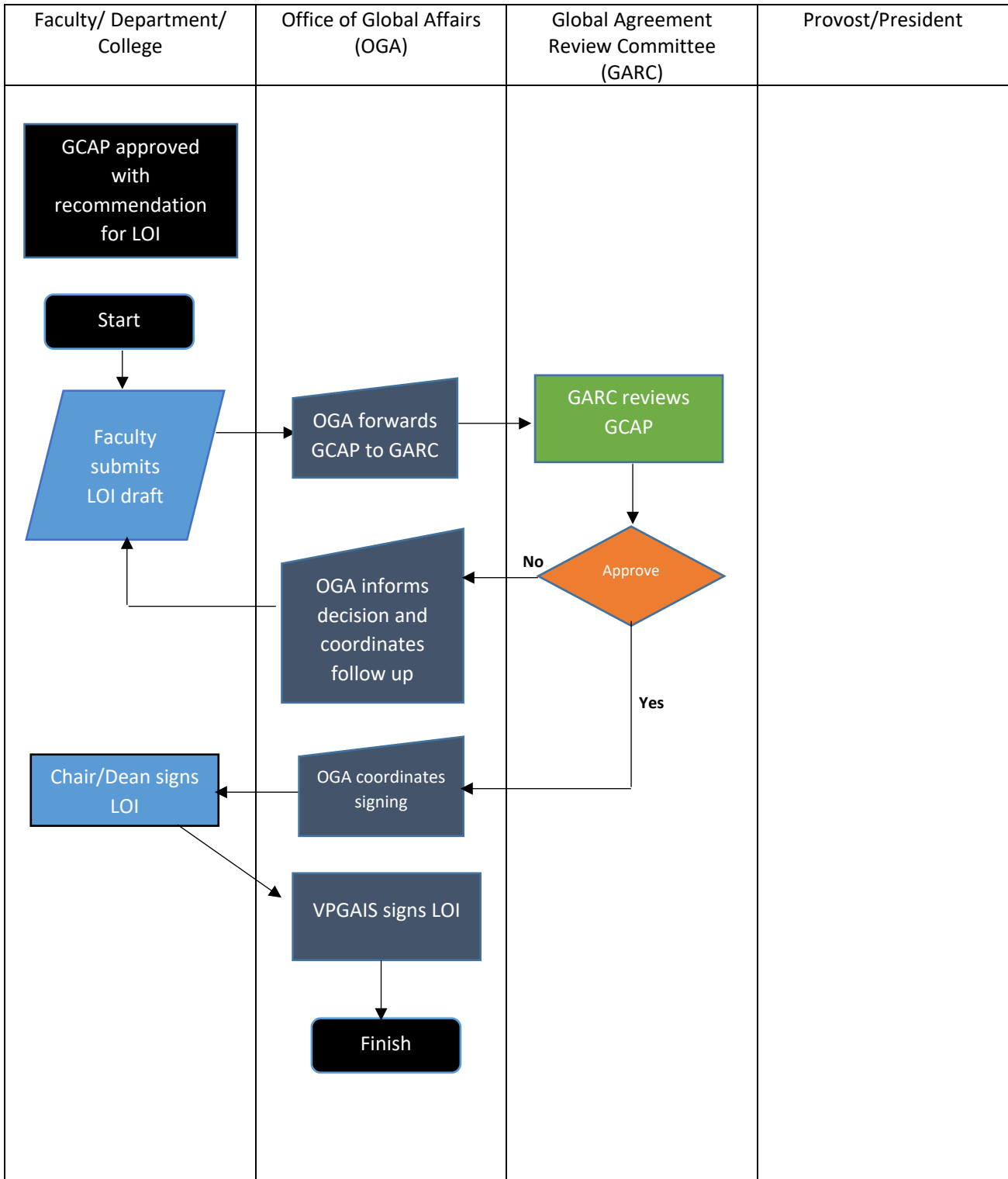
<b>AA</b>	Activity Agreement
<b>DDA</b>	Double/Dual/Joint Degree Agreement
<b>EVPP</b>	Office of Executive Vice President and Provost
<b>GARC</b>	Global Agreement Review Committee
<b>GCAP</b>	Global Cooperation Agreement Proposal
<b>LOI</b>	Letter of Intent
<b>MOU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>OGA</b>	Office of Global Affairs
<b>OHIO</b>	Ohio University
<b>ORSP</b>	Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
<b>RSEA</b>	Reciprocal Student Exchange Agreement
<b>SAC</b>	Study Away Committee
<b>UIC</b>	University International Council
<b>VPGAIS</b>	Vice Provost for Global Affairs and International Studies

## Appendix B. Review and Approval Process

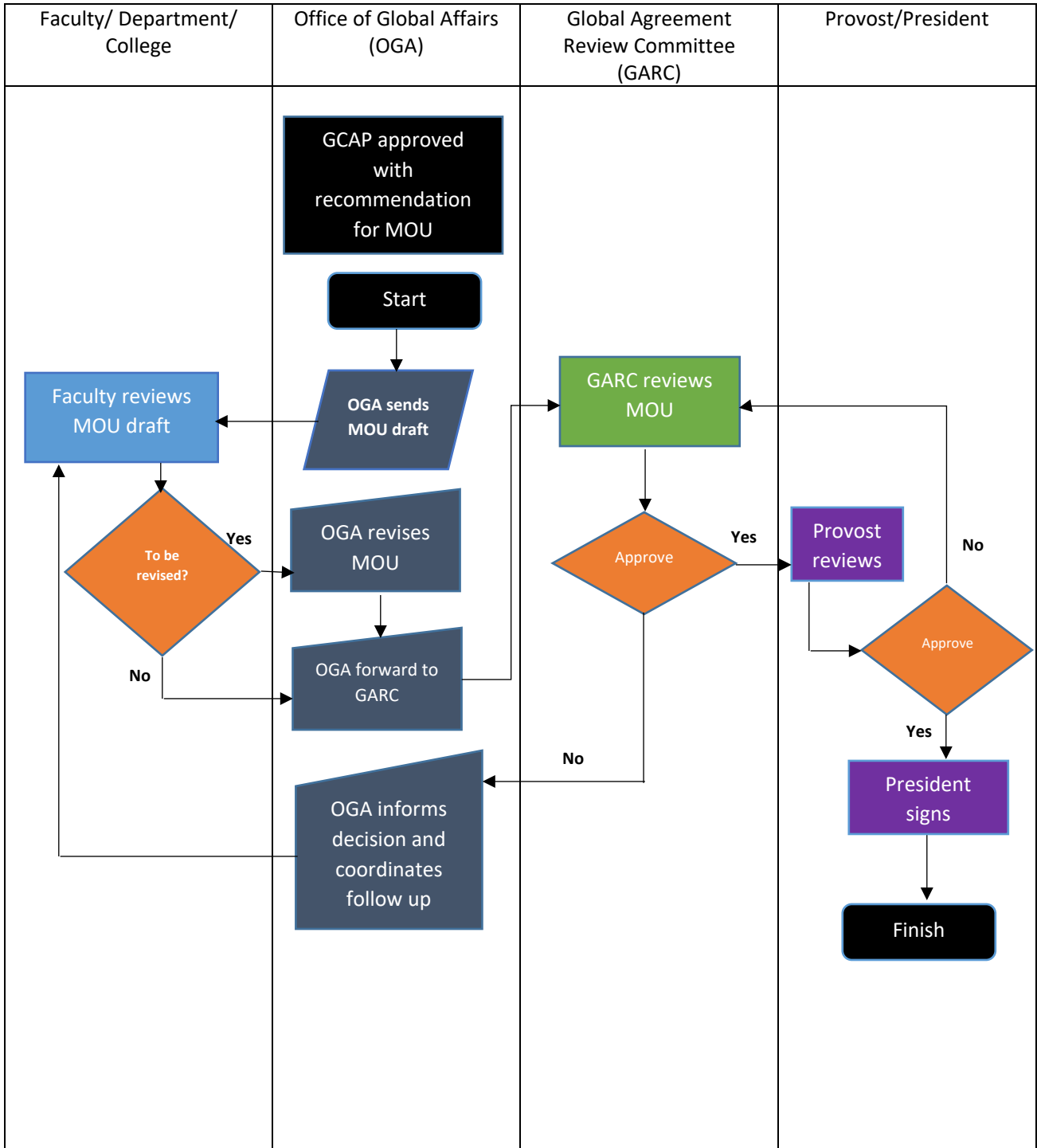
### Global Cooperation Agreement Proposal (GCAP)



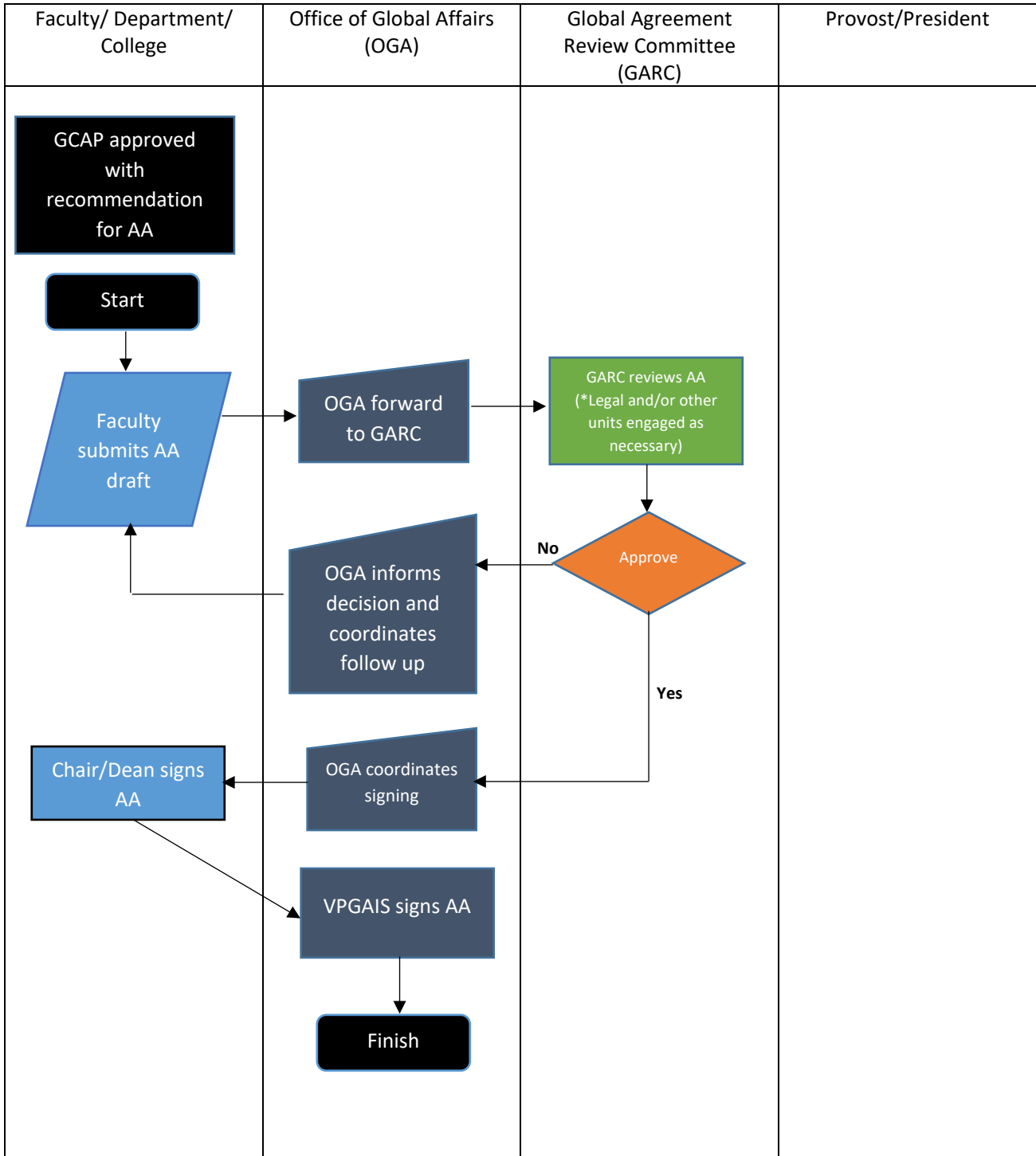
**Letter of Intent (LOI)**



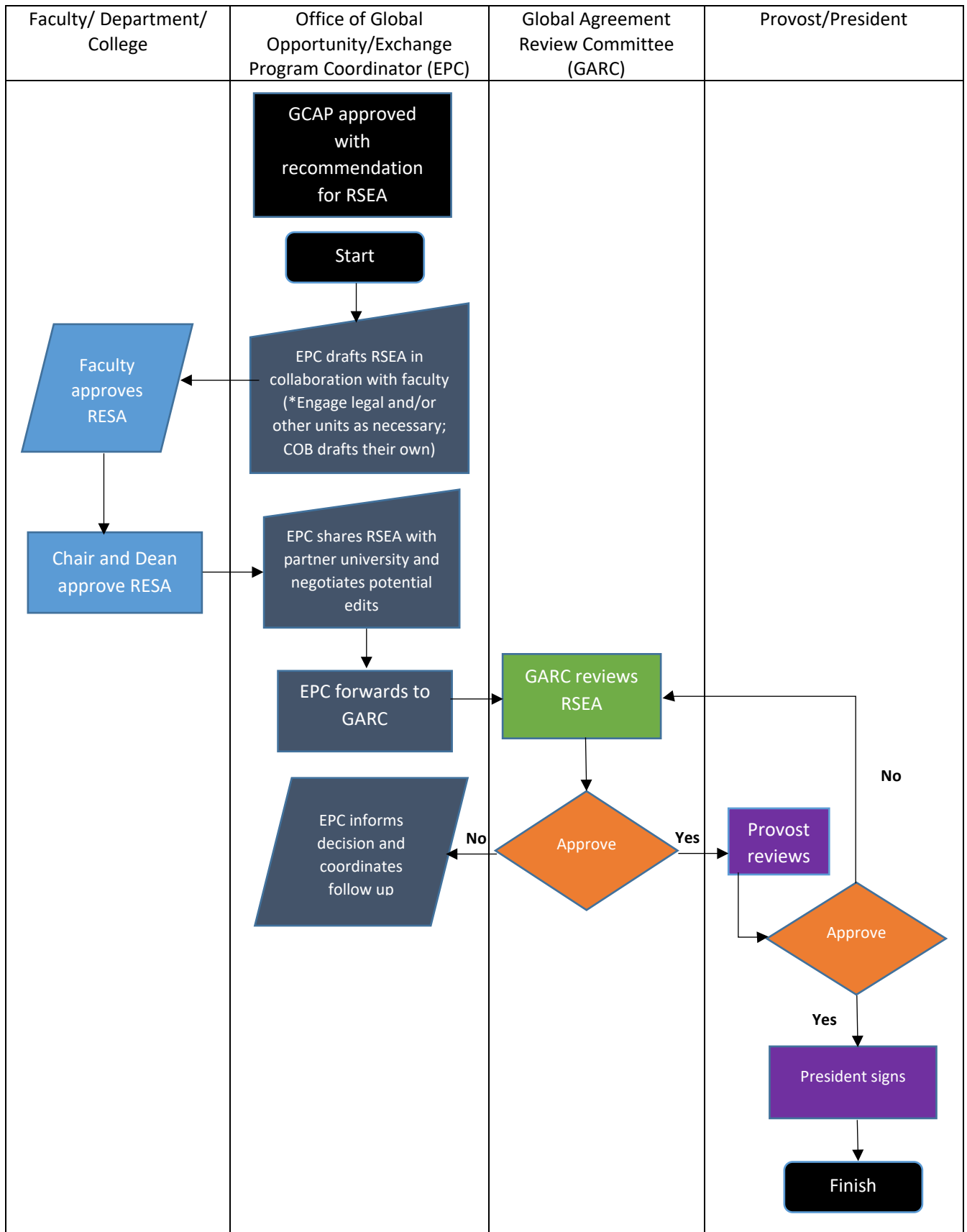
**Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**



**Activity Agreement (AA)**



**Reciprocal Student Exchange Agreement (RSEA)**



**Dual/Double/Joint Degree Agreement (DDA)**

