

Affiliation Agreements

What is an Affiliation Agreement?

An Affiliation Agreement is typically a contract between an educational institution and another organization that establish the terms under which students from the educational institution can engage in experiential or other learning experiences with the organization.

Affiliation Agreements include agreements that allow Penn State students to engage in experiential learning experiences at outside organizations to satisfy degree requirements or to enhance their learning in their field of study. They are also utilized to allow students from other educational institutions to participate in experiential learning experiences at Penn State. An Affiliation Agreement can also facilitate dual enrollment where a high school student can take classes at Penn State, or students enrolled at one institution of higher education can take courses at another for credit at their home university.

Affiliation Agreements are particularly common in departments where experiential learning is a required component of the degree program, such as education or health care fields. However, any department can request an Affiliation Agreement when needed to support their students' experience or if they would like to host students from other educational institutions for experiential learning.

Affiliation Agreements typically involve unpaid internships or practicums where the student receives credit from their educational institution.

When is an Affiliation Agreement appropriate?

Departments and colleges at Penn State:

1. That would like to offer credit for students engaging in practical experiences external to Penn State;
2. That would like to host students from other colleges and universities for practical experiences that will earn the student credit at their school of enrollment; or
3. Have received a request from one of their students who is seeking a signature on an affiliation agreement requested by an organization.

What is the approval process?

Affiliation Agreements are submitted to the Office of General Counsel. Departments or colleges at University Park submit directly to the Office of General Counsel. Commonwealth Campus departments should submit their affiliation agreements to the Office of the Vice President of Commonwealth Campuses; that office will coordinate submission to Office of General Counsel. Individual students whose placements or internships require an Affiliation Agreement should submit their request to their department or college.

All Affiliation Agreement correspondence with the Office of General Counsel should be emailed to AffiliationsOGC@psu.edu (for University Park) and ovpcccompliance@psu.edu (for Commonwealth Campuses).

Affiliation Agreements using Penn State templates

The Office of General Counsel has worked with many departments and colleges that regularly place students with sites for practical training to develop form templates that can be used as Affiliation Agreements. Departments can request a template from the Office of General Counsel, when needed.

Affiliation Agreements from another organization's proposed contract

The third-party organization or educational institution may prefer to utilize their own forms. This is permitted, though departments and colleges should utilize Penn State templates, when possible, as this will minimize the time needed for the review process.

Affiliation Agreement review process:

1. The department initiates the process:
 - a. If using a Penn State template, provide the agreement to the site organization for review
 - i. If they return a signed agreement, proceed to step 4
 - ii. If they return it with proposed changes, proceed to step 2
 - b. If starting with the other organization's template, obtain the proposed agreement from the organization.
2. Email AffiliationsOGC@psu.edu (for University Park) or ovpcccompliance@psu.edu (for Commonwealth Campuses) with:
 - a. A copy of the signed or marked document,
 - b. Note in the email any questions or concerns you have about the agreement. Particularly note if there are any terms that the department has concerns with or would be unable to effectuate.
3. If any terms are problematic, the Office of General Counsel will provide the department with a marked copy with proposed revisions. The department is responsible for providing those proposed revisions to the organization.
4. Once an agreement is reached, it will need an authorized signature.
 - a. For departments with preapproved templates with no changes, the designated signatory for that document would be the signor,
 - b. For all other agreements, the Office of General Counsel will coordinate signature with the Controller's office and provide the signed document to the department.
5. The department is responsible for procuring the organization's signature and maintaining a copy of the finalized agreement in accordance with Penn State's records retention policies.
 - a. The department should have a system for maintaining a list of organizations with which its programs already have Affiliation Agreements in place and a process for checking that list before seeking a new agreement.
 - b. The department is responsible for maintaining the agreement in accordance with Penn State's records retention policies. The Office of General Counsel does not maintain a copy of the executed agreement.