



UT RESEARCH MANAGEMENT SUITE

Agreements Module Frequently Asked Questions

Memoranda of Understanding (MOU)

1. What is a Memorandum of Understanding?

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) acknowledges and manages the strategic relationship between institutions over the course of defined period of time or in support of proposed and/or active research activities. These contracts outline - in usually non-legally binding terms and conditions – intentions to collaborate with another institution or organization under a set of broadly conceptualized plans and objectives agreed to by both parties. MOUs may generally provide for possible joint research activities without the commitment of funds or other resources.

2. May I sign a Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of the University?

All finalized research-related MOUs at UT Austin – whether we are the initiating or receiving party - must be signed by designated authorized officials of each institution or organization. **Principal Investigators may not sign on behalf of UT Austin for MOUs or any other research-related agreement.** However, they will be required to sign such agreements acknowledging their responsibilities and affirming their agreement to the terms and conditions of the contract. Authorized university contracts signatories are on staff in the Offices of Sponsored Projects and Industry Engagement (OIE/OSP).

In the event that a UT-employed researcher or staff member is either required by an external organization or individual to sign an MOU or requires an external party to sign an MOU, the process begins by creating an agreement in [UT Research Management Suite - Agreements](#) and selecting Memorandum of Understanding as the agreement type.

3. What are reasons for creating a Memorandum of Understanding?

- Development of collaborative research efforts between UT Austin and a foreign partner
- Establishment of a broad, non-binding research relationship with another institution with the goal of exploring and identifying possible research collaborations. This typically assumes intent to subsequently enter into more specific legally binding funded research agreements at either a specified or undetermined future date.
- Documentation of the intent to collaborate with an external partner in a research area that has already been defined, or generally outlined. This type of specific non-binding agreement typically precedes a legally binding funded research agreement.

4. When should I request a Memorandum of Understanding?

UT Austin and external parties should conduct preliminary discussions with the goal of developing the necessary formal agreement, such as agreements for sponsored research, research collaborations, gifts, and research faculty or student exchanges.

5. What information and provisions are included in a Memorandum of Understanding?

MOUs identify the parties to the agreement. Additionally, they:

- Broadly describe the areas of mutual interest and elements of the potential collaboration
- Express goodwill and reflect the general nature of the intended relationship
- Do NOT include terms requiring negotiation (Intellectual property, payment terms, etc.)
- Do NOT require a detailed scope of work

6. What is the review workflow for a research MOU?

Upon submitting an MOU request, the Offices of Sponsored Projects and/or Industry Engagement will perform a full institutional review. Additionally, for any MOUs that identify a foreign institution, organization, or governmental agency as the contracting party, the MOU will also be reviewed by the following:

- Associate Dean of Research for the PI's home department/research unit
- Office of the Vice-President for Research
- Office of the Senior Vice-Provost for Global Engagement