**PROCEDURE**

**FOR RECOGNITION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF FOREIGN PARTNERS,**

**CONCLUSION OF BILATERAL AGREEMENTS FOR ACADEMIC COOPERATION AND WORK WITH INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS**

This procedure regulates solely the recognition and acknowledgment of foreign partners and the conclusion of agreements for academic cooperation and does not regulate agreements for joint training, educational franchising and other agreements regulated by the Higher Education Act or other legislative acts.

The procedure for the recognition and acknowledgment of foreign partners and the conclusion of agreements for academic cooperation passes through the following main stages:

1. **Recognition of international partners**
2. Initiation of a proposal for recognition of a foreign partner
	1. A proposal for recognition of a foreign partner can be made:
* At the initiative of the Medical University of Varna (MU-Varna)
* At the initiative of a foreign university and/or another institution
* At the recommendation of a partners, disciple and/or a department/staff member/ representative of MU-Varna
* Based on a need, as a result of joint work, project or programme
* Based on information from another source (media, publications, internet surveys, etc.) which is of interest to MU-Varna and would help achieve the strategic goals and scientific priorities of the University.
	1. The initiator’s proposal should be in writing, it should include motivation and be accompanied with proposals for the scope, fields of cooperation and the specific activities to be included in the agreement for academic cooperation and the working programme attached to it.
	2. The proposal should be submitted to the Department of International Relations together with the contact numbers of the initiator or the person who will be in charge for the implementation of the collaboration.
1. Survey of the partners
	1. After the initiation of the proposal for recognition of a foreign partner, a survey is conducted about the validity of the available information and its correspondence to the objectives and the approved scientific priorities of MU-Varna. The survey is based the following:
* Information available on the internet;
* Information submitted by the partner – in a letter, on its website, advertising materials, fora, in the media and the public space;
* Information submitted by the initiator of the partnership;
* Information submitted by third parties;
* Information submitted by diplomatic and consular representative offices of the Republic of Bulgaria in the respective foreign country and/or the respective foreign country in the Republic of Bulgaria.
1. Criteria for recognition of international partners
* Presence of an identical structure;
* Willingness for cooperation in a specific field of mutual interest;
* Available resources for the achievement of the agreement goals;
* Available valid information about the merits of the prospective partner, outcomes of previous projects and expressed positive feedback by other partners.
1. Establishment of contacts with the potential international partner
	1. In case that the outcome of the conducted survey leads to the recognition of the prospective partner, a contact is established and steps are undertaken to enquire as to whether there is mutual willingness for the establishment of the cooperation.
	2. The whole process takes place in full interaction and coordination between the Department of International Relations and the initiator of the cooperation.
2. **Negotiations between the parties**
3. After the establishment of a mutual willingness for cooperation negotiations are started between the parties for the preliminary identification of its parameters.
4. Each of the parties determines a contact person/persons to be in charge of the implementation of the cooperation.
5. The negotiations are carried out in writing (official letters, correspondence via e-mail, protocols from working meetings).
6. The contact persons agree on the fields of cooperation, the stages of its implementation, working languages as well as the specific parameters of the working programme for the following academic year.

1. **Preparation and approval of the agreement for academic cooperation**
2. The agreement for academic cooperation is written in English and the native languages of the parties to the agreement. A copy in Bulgarian language is mandatory even when the Bulgarian variant is not signed by the negotiating parties.
3. An annual working programme is prepared to each agreement for academic cooperation which contains the specific activities and initiatives for the respective academic year.
4. The agreement for academic cooperation is complied with a legal advisor. The corrections and amendments made by the legal advisor are coordinated with the contact person for the foreign partner.
5. After the finalization of the text of the agreement for academic cooperation it is approved by the chief accountant officer of MU-Varna irrespective of the whether the agreement implies financial liability, and with the Vice rector for International relations, Accreditation and Quality.
6. **Approval by the Academic Council of MU-Varna**

Before signing the agreement for academic cooperation it must be approved by a decision of the Academic Council. The procedure is carried out in accordance with the internal normative documentation of MU-Varna.

1. **Signing of an agreement for academic cooperation**
2. An agreement for academic cooperation can be signed as follows:
* By the two or more parties simultaneously at an organized ceremony;
* By the two or more parties consecutively. All the copies are signed, stamped and dated after which they are posted by regular or registered mail to the other party/parties to the agreement.
1. The agreement for academic cooperation is signed by the Rector of MU-Varna or by a person explicitly authorized in writing by him/her.
2. **Safe-keeping**
3. After being signed by all the parties, the agreement is registered in the Register of the agreements signed by MU-Varna.
4. The originals are kept in the archive of MU-Varna and a copy of the agreement and the working programme are submitted to and kept at the Department of International Relations.
5. A copy of the agreement and the working programme can be submitted to other units, departments and/or structures of MU-Varna who might be interested.
6. **Expiry, renewal and termination of an agreement for academic cooperation**
7. The Department of International Relations monitors the expiry dates of the concluded agreements for academic cooperation kept at the Department.
8. At least 1 (one) month before the expiry term of an agreement the Department of International Relations notifies the contact person(s) for the partnership.
9. Based on the analysis of the cooperation, a decision is taken about a renewal or termination of the agreement.
10. In case it is decided that the agreement for academic cooperation is to be renewed, correspondence begins with the international partner followed by a procedure for signing a new agreement.
11. **Work with international partners**
12. The work with an international partner is coordinated by a determined contact person from the department initiating the partnership.
13. The contact person prepares annual working programmes including specific areas and activities which are to be carried out by the partners during the following academic year.
14. If needed, the Department of International Relations assists and provides consultations about the effective and quality accomplishment of the pre-determined objectives and tasks.
15. Irrespective of whether assistance and/or expert consultation is offered by the Department of International Relations, it should be informed about any activities carried out within the partnerships during business trips, visits of foreign partners, guest lecturers and official delegations, organization of conferences, seminars and other events with international participation.