

Creating Graduate Dual-Degree and Joint-Degree Programs at Rice University

Guidelines Proposal - March 9, 2012 – extensively revised John Olson and Arnaud Chevallier, April -July 2012, in response to Senate EC comments, GC meeting August 21, 2012.

A. Policy for Preparation and Review of Proposals for New Graduate Dual- and Joint-Degree Programs at Rice University

The purpose of this policy is to identify the key issues that need to be addressed for the creation and operation of dual and joint graduate degrees with foreign partner institutions and, in some cases, institutions from within the United States. The process for establishing these dual and joint degrees is similar to that for creating or changing traditional graduate degree programs at Rice University. The guidelines, issues, and definitions in this policy are intended to facilitate the preparation and careful evaluation of proposals and, at the same time, ensure that each program is judged on its own merits with respect to quality and the appropriateness of granting one (joint) or two (dual) degrees.

The Council of Graduate Schools has provided the following definitions: "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"; and "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 an international collaborative program)."

To facilitate proposal writing and maximize efficiency, a two-step process has been adopted for proposal evaluation and approval.

The first step involves the submission and initial review of a short pre-proposal. The applicants should prepare a document that describes concisely the proposed program, making sure that the issues and questions listed in Section B below are addressed. The pre-proposal should be sent to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, which will refer it to a pre-screening committee for review (See Appendix A).

After pre-approval, the second step involves the preparation of a full proposal, which should follow the more detailed guidelines in section C of this policy. This full proposal will need approval by all the participating departments, schools, and institutions. A detailed financial plan with approval from the Rice Budget Office is also required. The final proposal must then be submitted to the Faculty Senate and then reviewed by the Graduate Council. The Graduate Council will send its evaluation to the Senate Executive Committee for submission to the Faculty Senate as a whole for their final approval and recommendation to the Provost and President. A description of the entire approval process is given in Appendix B.

B. Preparation of Pre-Proposals for New Graduate Dual- and Joint-Degree Programs at Rice University

Use the following title page.

Partner Institution(s)	
Program	
Sponsoring department(s) and contact information	

Then describe the academic goals and feasibility of the proposed program by answering the following questions. **The pre-proposal should be no more than 10 pages in length.**

1. Is the program intellectually compelling for Rice University?

- a. What are the **academic objectives** of the new proposal; how are they distinct from existing graduate programs both in intellectual goals and scope; and is this program the best approach to solving the key problems associated with the field(s) of study (*i.e.*, what is new and state of the art)? **Do the program's requirements meet Rice's and the participating department's minimum standards for Rice Masters and Doctorate degrees (see http://ga.rice.edu/GR_regulations/)?**
- b. How is the new program aligned with **Rice's strategic priorities** (V2C and university and individual schools initiatives) and with **national and international educational, technological, and scientific priorities** set by the U.S. government and international organizations *etc.*?
- c. Does the program already have **a critical mass of Rice faculty** working in the area that could attract at least 2-3 new world-class students per year over five years.
- d. Will the program be **highly competitive** and aid in recruiting and retaining outstanding faculty (*i.e.*, how would this program be distinctive and world class compared to its competitors)?

2. Is the program feasible and sustainable for Rice University?

- a. Is the program logistically feasible in terms of **sufficient faculty interest** (*i.e.*, is there a critical mass of motivated faculty sponsors to implement the project and sustain its operation)?
- b. Is the program being built with **the right institutional partner** (*e.g.*, is there a history of previous formal agreements, joint research projects, or other significant interactions between Rice faculty/staff and the proposed partner)?
- c. How does the specific partner institution help this program be more than what it would be if offered only by Rice (*i.e.*, **does the partner have a comparable or better reputation** in the subject area than Rice; is the partner program well established; is the partner institution complementary in research strengths and resources; and does the partner institution have governing academic and compliance policies that are compatible with Rice's)?
- d. **Is establishing a dual or joint degree the best approach** to achieve the proposed goal or are there better alternatives (*e.g.*, establishing or reinforcing student exchange programs, establishing or enhancing support of research collaborations, *etc.*)?
- e. **Is the program financially realistic** (*i.e.*, are the initial investments and ongoing operational costs possible, and are the potential pay offs in terms of obtaining external funding attractive)?
- f. **What other costs are there in terms of lost opportunities for other programs**, other curricular activities, and faculty and staff time? (If possible, include information about how the needs of existing programs will be met if the budget assumes diverting current resources to the new program.)
- g. Are all **other potential liabilities/risks** associated with the programs manageable, including the physical safety and reputations of Rice students and employees?

C. Preparation of Full Proposals for New Graduate Dual- and Joint-Degree Programs at Rice University

The full proposal should follow as closely as possible the guidelines in this policy and provide a clear and complete description of the new or changed program. The topics that need to be addressed are listed in sections 1 through 14 below. Proposals for changes to existing programs can provide more abbreviated justifications for many of these sections, if the alterations are minor.

Possible questions that might be asked by the pre-screening committee, the Graduate Council, and the Senate during the review process are given in the Appendix C. These questions are arranged by section, serve only as guides for both writing and orally defending the proposal, and do not need to be incorporated directly into the proposal.

The approval of a new graduate-degree program by the Faculty Senate represents an endorsement by the whole faculty of the intellectual merit and academic rigor of a particular course of study. The subsequent publication of the degree in the General Announcements confirms an on-going, long-term commitment by Rice University to the maintenance of the program. Thus, any new graduate-degree program will undergo an exceptionally high level of scrutiny and discussion before approval.

1. Rationale: An explanation of the intellectual merit of and the rationale for the proposed program should include: (1) an explanation of the history and development of the subject area of the program if it is new to Rice University and the partner institution; (2) a survey of how the subject has been incorporated into the curriculum of Rice's peer institutions and how the proposed program compares to existing programs at those institutions; (3) an explanation of how the proposed program strengthens Rice's educational and research mission within the department, the school, and the university as a whole; (4) an assessment of need for the proposed program; (5) a description of the career prospects for students completing the program, and (6) a discussion of how the program will help Rice establish and/or reinforce alliances with other key universities, federal agencies, and companies.

2. Curriculum: The curriculum has important implications for the costs, administration, and the timeline for implementation of a new program. An innovative curriculum is required to generate enthusiasm and, ultimately, will determine the success of any new program. Three key issues that need to be addressed in the proposal are: (1) the nature of the degree, master's versus doctorate, thesis versus non-thesis, and dual versus joint degree; (2) management of inter-institutional advising and assessments of progress for dual and joint degrees; and (3) the extent of additional requirements for a dual-degree compared to a single degree program. A sample program time line for a typical student should be provided, including lists of required and elective courses, qualifying examinations, progress reviews, and the thesis defense requirements. A detailed description of the extra work and qualifications should be given for programs where two Ph.D. degrees will be conferred, one from each institution. Current dual-degree programs involving combined M.D./Ph.D., Ph.D./M.B.A., and M.D./M.B.A degrees assume students will meet almost all of the requirements of the individual programs, with some dual credit for overlapping courses and research activities. Dual Ph.D. programs in the same field are expected to have significantly increased requirements and a more extensive dissertation (*e.g.* proficiency in the other institution's native language, more extensive research, greater length of the thesis, more publications, *etc.*). **All such programs are expected to meet Rice's and the participating department's minimum requirements for Masters and Doctorate degrees – see http://ga.rice.edu/GR_regulations/.**

3. Partner Institution: Selecting the right partner institution is critical to the success of any dual- or joint-degree program. Thus, the proposal should contain a description of previous formal agreements, joint research projects, or any other significant interactions between Rice faculty/staff and the

proposed institutional partner (*i.e.*, strong partnerships have roots in time-tested relationships that have been successful and also have overcome conflicts and some failures). The quality of the partner institution should be discussed in terms of its national and international rankings, personal knowledge of Rice faculty, and other measures of its reputation, research strengths, and unique resources. It is also important that the partner institution has governing academic and compliance policies that are compatible with Rice policy (see corresponding questions in Appendix C, sections 4 and 9.)

4. Students and Academic Standards: The student's experience will ultimately determine the success of the new program. Describe the policies for recruitment, admissions, evaluation, and advising and the parameters for completion of the program. The general rules and minimum standards for all graduate programs at Rice University must be followed. Projections of initial and steady-state enrollments should be given. The key to any successful new program will be the recruitment of a critical mass of outstanding students from both partner institutions (*e.g.* greater than 10 students over a period of 4-5 years). The academic standards of the new program need to be defined and follow or exceed current Rice University policies, which include minimum residency time and grade point averages, qualifying examinations, and thesis defense rules (http://ga.rice.edu/GR_degrees/). Dismissal and grievance procedures also need to follow current Rice University guidelines (<http://www.graduate.rice.edu/dismissals/>). Finally, a plan is needed for students who are in good standing at one institution but not the other or who, after enrolling, choose to pursue only a single degree at their home institution.

5. Learning: To comply with SACS accreditation requirements (see below), as well as best practices in curriculum design, the proposal must include (1) a description of student learning outcomes (SLO) that have clear standards for measurable student-centered outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills, and behaviors; (2) a curriculum map that relates the components of the proposed program to the specified student learning outcomes; and (3) an assessment plan for measuring the success and effectiveness of the program after implementation (see section C.14 below). The Office of Institutional Effectiveness is charged with assisting proposers with the development of these elements.

6. Faculty and Courses: Include a listing of current faculty members and their qualifications at each academic rank, who will regularly teach courses and supervise students in the program, and provide any concrete plans for hiring of new faculty. Include a listing of existing courses that will serve the program and, most importantly, a listing of new courses that will be developed. Include an explanation of how the new academic program will be staffed on a sustainable basis and how it will impact existing degree programs and faculty workload. Explain what measures will be needed to compensate for any reallocated resources.

7. Resources: Describe library, equipment, and information resources that need to be put in place to support the new program. Describe physical facilities and staffing that will be required to support the program. Assess the impact the new program will have on resources needed and available for existing programs at Rice University.

8. Financial Support: Provide a business plan that includes the following: (a) start-up and ongoing costs; (b) projected income, expenditures, and cash flow; and (c) contingency plans in case projected resources do not materialize. *A long-term budget (covering at least five years), developed in consultation with the Budget Office, must be included and contain a letter of approval from the Comptroller of Rice University.* For dual- and joint-degree programs with other institutions, describe any attractive financial or fund raising considerations that help justify the program and any potential financial liabilities.

9. Administration and Program Governance: Include a description of how the program will be administered. This should include a description of the number of students who will be admitted (target enrollment), how students will be admitted to the program, how they will be advised, and how their

progress will be tracked (see sections C.2 and C.4, above). In general, there must be an annual review of each student's progress, initially by a graduate advising committee and, for doctoral candidates, a formal thesis progress review meeting with a written report to be prepared by key thesis committee members after admission to candidacy. Rules for dismissal and student grievances need to be established, following the guidelines from the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies at Rice University (again, see <http://www.graduate.rice.edu/dismissals/>)

10. Degree Requirements for the General Announcements: Provide complete and specific language describing the official name of the degree and the exact requirements for students to complete the degree, as they would appear in the Rice University General Announcements and in program documents. This description should include a demonstration that the curricular requirements for the proposed program meet all applicable rules for graduate students and graduate degrees specified in the General Announcements for Rice University. Additional departmental requirements should also be included, as well as a description of a typical path of a student completing the program.

11. Launch: A description, with a timeline, of the process of launching the new program should be provided for both institutions and based on the budgetary considerations described in section C.8.

12. Academic Support at Rice University: Letters of support from all relevant deans and department chairs need to be included in the proposal. These letters should indicate that the resources required to support the new degree program will be available on an on-going basis as described in the budget outlined in Section C.8. For departmental chairs or deans (as appropriate), these letters should indicate whether or not the relevant departmental faculties have formally endorsed the proposal and, when appropriate, the level of enthusiasm.

13. Potential liabilities and other risks: Inter-institutional programs may bring with them special liabilities. Any anticipated issues related to the safety of Rice students and employees should be discussed and procedures for resolving them addressed.

14. Measures of Progress and Success: A new program will require careful monitoring during the first few years to be sensitive to any changes or adjustments that may be necessary. The parameters for success must be determined at the outset and measurements of these parameters established, all of which should be included in the proposal. The parameters may be different for each program, but generally, the following items need to be taken into account: finances, student experience and interest, faculty engagement, commitment of partnering institutions, as well as research output and other external measures of quality, such as graduate placement and general reputation. A timeline for these evaluations should be given.

D. Full Proposal Submission and Evaluation

Proposals for new graduate-degree programs should be submitted to the speaker of the faculty senate and the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies. The Faculty Senate will conduct a preliminary review of the proposal and forward it to the Graduate Council, in some cases, with questions or issues that need special attention. The proposal will then be evaluated by the Graduate Council, which will make a formal recommendation to the Faculty Senate. The Faculty Senate will make a final decision. The Graduate Council or the Faculty Senate may (1) ask the proposers to provide additional information not included in the original proposal before acting on the proposal, (2) ask the proposers to revise the proposal extensively, and/or (3) ask external experts to review the proposal.

E. Definition: Major Changes in Existing Programs

Rice University recognizes the need for ongoing innovation in the curriculum and, as such, gives wide latitude to the faculty within each academic department to define and adjust the specific curricular requirements of the programs that they administer. This flexibility includes defining different academic “tracks” within a single program, as described in the General Announcements. Such adjustments do not, in general, require the approval of the Faculty Senate. In contrast, however, changes of a major nature in an existing graduate program, including, but not limited to, combining two graduate programs into a single program, splitting a graduate program into two separate graduate programs, dropping or adding a thesis requirement, or eliminating a graduate program, do require the approval of the Faculty Senate, after an evaluation by the Graduate Council. Proposals for major changes in degree programs must follow the format required for proposals for new degree programs.

The official name of a graduate program is the one that appears with and is used to label the specific set of requirements that define the degree program, as described in the most recent edition of the General Announcements. Changing the name of an existing program requires approval by the Faculty Senate, after evaluation by the Graduate Council. Proposals should describe the intended change and provide appropriate justification. Such justification might include a demonstration that the change is in the interest of Rice students and faculty, or that it is consistent with the relevant faculties’ understanding of relevant changes in the wider academic community. When the name change is accompanied by major changes to degree requirements, these changes also require approval.

Changes to degree requirements for dual- or joint-degree programs require approval of all academic units (departments and schools) and institutions. In the case of major changes, the lead unit is responsible for communicating with the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, the Graduate Council, and the Faculty Senate at Rice University and with the equivalent offices and administration at the partner institutions. A change in the lead unit at Rice University and the participating institutions must be approved by the Faculty Senate, subject to sufficient justification and the appropriate agreement of all participating departments and schools, which are part of the collaborative arrangement.

F. Accreditation by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

The introduction of a new graduate-degree program or substantial changes to a current program requires that SACS be notified at least six months prior to implementation of the new or revised program. When a new or revised program significantly modifies or expands the scope of Rice University, then SACS requires notification, as well as approval, prior to implementation. Proposers of new or revised programs will be responsible for preparing the information required by SACS with assistance and guidance from Rice’s Office of Institutional Effectiveness (which has the responsibility of interacting with SACS) and the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. SACS notification and approval of programs is necessary for recognition by the US Department of Education, which is required for federal funding (e.g., financial aid, grants, etc.).

G. Applicability and Scope of the Policy

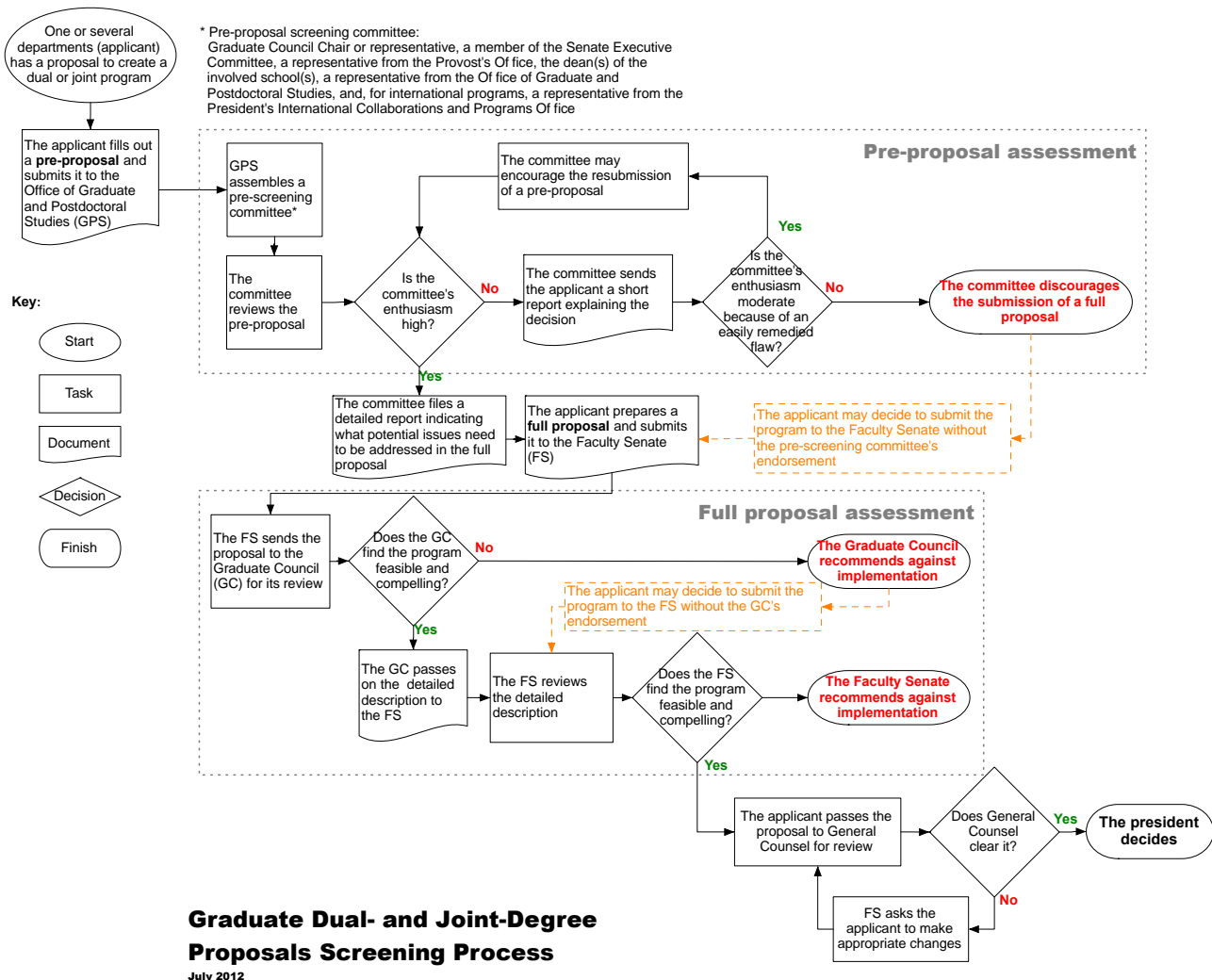
This policy shall apply to any and all proposals for the establishment of new dual- or joint-degree programs or major changes in existing dual- or joint-degree programs that have not yet been approved by the Faculty Senate previous to its adoption.

APPENDIX A: Pre-Screening Committee Composition

The pre-screening committee will review the pre-proposal and be composed of the Graduate Council Chair or representative, a member of the Senate Executive Committee, a representative from the Provost's Office, the dean(s) of the involved school(s), a representative from the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, and, for international programs, a representative from the President's International Collaborations and Programs Office.

APPENDIX B: Flow Chart for Proposal Approval.

After careful consideration, the pre-screening committee will provide a level of enthusiasm, from high to moderate to low. If the consensus is low to moderate enthusiasm, a short report will be sent to the applicants outlining the reasons behind the decision, and submission of a full proposal will be discouraged. If the vote is moderate enthusiasm because of an easily remedied flaw, then a resubmission of a pre-proposal may be encouraged. If the level of enthusiasm is high, then the committee will file a more detailed report, indicating what issues need to be addressed in a full proposal.



APPENDIX C: Possible Questions That Might Be Asked by Review Committees and the Senate.

These questions follow the sections in Part C: Preparation of Full Proposals for New Graduate Dual- and Joint-Degree Programs at Rice University

1. Rationale:

- 1.1 Does the program align with Rice's strategic priorities?
- 1.2 Does the proposed thematic focus enhance Rice initiatives in bioscience and health, energy and the environment, and international strategy?
- 1.3 Does it support increased Rice research capacity and impact?
- 1.4 Does it support other stated goals of Rice's Mission Statement or the Vision for the Second Century?
- 1.5 Does this program help Rice establish and/or reinforce alliances with other key universities, federal agencies, companies, etc., and if so, why are these alliances important for Rice?
- 1.6 How does the collaboration create a truly excellent program, and does the collaboration achieve excellence and pre-eminence that could not be achieved at Rice alone?

2. Curriculum:

- 2.1 Is it a master's or doctoral program; is it a thesis or non-thesis program?
- 2.2 Is the program new or an adaptation of an existing Rice program?
- 2.3 Are the changes to or adaptation of the program substantive? If so they can trigger the need for SACS, AACSB, and other accrediting bodies to take a closer look at these programs. (It is important to consider the implications of changes to the curriculum by contacting the Office of Institutional Effectiveness for guidance.)
- 2.4 Which courses will make up the curriculum, and how will they be divided between Rice and the partner institution in terms of requirements and electives?
- 2.5 What is the sequence of courses for a hypothetical student?
- 2.6 What are the languages of instruction?
- 2.7 Does the program confer a dual degree or a joint degree?
- 2.8 Dual degrees usually allow for counting a number of academic credits multiple times, once towards each degree. What proportion of the study plan is eligible for double counting?
- 2.9 If the program confers a dual degree and a thesis is required, does it require one or two theses?
- 2.10 If only one thesis is required, how will the standards be higher than those for a single degree program? A description of how the higher standards will be enforced must be presented, and assurance must be given that, if the thesis is acceptable, both institutions can publish it.
- 2.11 What is the projected duration of the student's enrollment in the program, and how is it appropriate for the dual or joint degree?
- 2.12 How is the proposed curriculum appropriate for the purpose and goals of the degree(s) awarded?

3. Partner Institution:

- 3.1 Are there any previous formal agreements, joint research projects, or any other significant interactions between Rice faculty/staff and the proposed institutional partner (i.e., strong partnerships have roots in time-tested relationships that have been successful and also overcome conflict and some failures)?
- 3.2 Is establishing the proposed program the best approach to achieve our goal or are there better alternatives, such as establishing or reinforcing student exchange program and establishing or enhancing research collaborations?
- 3.3 How does this specific partner institution help the proposed program be more than what it would be if offered only by Rice?
- 3.4 How high is the quality of the partner institution as measured by national and international rankings, personal knowledge of Rice faculty, and other methods?

- 3.5 Does the partner institution have a comparable or better reputation in the subject area compared to Rice?
- 3.6 Is the partner program well established?
- 3.7 Is the partner institution complementary in research strengths and resources?
- 3.8 Does the partner institution have governing academic and compliance policies that are compatible with Rice policy?
- 3.9 Are the learning resources (library, laboratories and other university facilities) and student support services of our partner institution comparable to our own?
- 3.10 How do our partner's students' learning outcomes for this program compare to ours?
- 3.11 Does our partner have academic program approval processes, including vetting by a faculty group comparable to the Faculty Senate?
- 3.12 Are the admission policies and standards of our partner similar to ours?
- 3.13 Does our partner have compatible procedures for the acceptance of academic credit?
- 3.14 Does our partner have compatible practices for awarding credit?
- 3.15 Does our partner have consortia relationships and contract agreements that could generate a conflict of interest or other complications?
- 3.16 Is the number of academic credits necessary to obtain a degree from our partner compatible with ours?
- 3.17 Are standards for handling student records (confidentiality, reliability, etc.) compatible?
- 3.18 Is our partner making available to students and the public current academic calendars, grading policies, and refund policies?
- 3.19 Does our partner have adequate procedures for addressing written student complaints and is it responsible for demonstrating that it follows those procedures when resolving student complaints?

4. Students and Academic Standards:

- 4.1 Does this program allow Rice to attract a critical mass (at least ten over five years) of world-class students?
- 4.2 What are the projected initial and steady state enrollments?
- 4.3 How does this program help Rice attract world-class graduate students?
- 4.4 Does the program allow students to enhance their research skills in a global context, expand their research networks, access specialized equipment and expertise, and/or enhance "science diplomacy" skills?
- 4.5 How do students get admitted (one admission process or more), and how are the Rice University minimum admission requirements met? A detailed description of the admission process is required from both Rice and the partner institution.
- 4.6 How many advisers will the students have (e.g., one at each institution)?
- 4.7 What are the minimum degree requirements at each institution? (Note that Rice University has minimum standards for graduate degrees—see http://ga.rice.edu/GR_regulations/)
- 4.8 What are the minimum requirements for good academic standing, the minimum GPA, and the minimum grade in required courses at each institution? (Again, the general Rice policy must be followed: http://ga.rice.edu/GR_degrees/).
- 4.9 How will qualifying examinations and annual written reviews of academic progress be administered at Rice and the partner institution?
- 4.10 How will the Rice guidelines for "dismissals, petitions, appeals, grievances, and problem resolution for graduate students" (<http://www.graduate.rice.edu/dismissals/>) be enforced?
- 4.11 What would be the consequences for a student who is in good standing in one institution but not the other?

5. Learning: Has the Office of Institutional Effectiveness reviewed and approved the proposal

6. Faculty and Courses: Have all faculty in participating departments voted to approve the proposal?

7. Resources: Will there be need for large commitments for new facilities?

8. Financial Support:

- 8.1 What's the potential to attract additional funding (from tuition, federal agencies, or other sources)?
- 8.2 Does the program require substantial investments in personnel (e.g., new program administrators, faculty, instructors, technicians, etc.)?
- 8.3 Does the program require substantial investments in labs, equipment, and other non-personnel resources?
- 8.4 Who pays tuition, tuition remissions, and stipends, and who covers additional costs such as travel expenses incurred by having committees from both institutions?
- 8.5 How will Rice's intellectual property policies be enforced? If an alternative policy is required, what needs to be addressed?

9. Administration and Program Governance:

- 9.1 To which department, school, or other oversight unit does the program report?
- 9.2 Who will be on the oversight committee?
- 9.3 How will this committee function, and how will its members be selected?
- 9.4 How will administrative and financial conflicts or disagreements be resolved?
- 9.5 What additional support is needed from departments, institutes/centers, schools, and the central administration at Rice University?
- 9.6 How will the integrity of the processes, procedures and academic offerings of our partner institution be monitored and kept up to accreditation standards?

10. Degree Requirements for the General Announcements: Does the proposal contain the description that will go into the GA?

11. Launch:

- 11.1 How does the timetable for the launch of the program compare to Rice's and the partner institution's internal procedures?
- 11.2 Do recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent practices and policies of the program?

12. Academic Support at Rice University: Are all letters of support in the proposal?

13. Potential liabilities and other risks:

- 13.1 Are there any anticipated issues related to the safety of Rice students and employees that will partake in this program?
- 13.2 Are there any significant needs to modify our policies with respect to student admissions, curricular requirements, structure of the program, etc. that might cause problems with students in traditional Rice programs?

14. Measures of Progress and Success:

- 14.1 What metrics will be used to evaluate the progress of the program as a whole?
- 14.2 What will be the frequency of these evaluations (i.e., annual review and/or milestone assessments after 3, 6, etc. years)?