



**NOSM**  
UNIVERSITY

# **Global Health Strategy**

Decision Support  
Framework for  
International Partnerships

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# OVERVIEW

This document outlines the practical application of NOSM University's Global Health Strategy and Guidance for International Partnerships. For further details please consult NOSM University's Global Health Strategy and Guidance for International Partnerships. This guidance is intended to be used throughout the University. The Global Health Coordinator, Vice Dean, Research, Innovation and International Relations and the Director, Planning and Risk can support the process of exploring and establishing an international partnership.

## QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE: NOSM UNIVERSITY'S GLOBAL HEALTH STRATEGY

### Focus

*Collaborative partnerships and advocacy towards social accountability and global health equity through health professional education, research and service delivery that links expertise with overcoming local, Northern Ontario health inequity to other, similar global contexts.*

### Vision

*Advancing global health equity through social accountability, advocacy and innovative health professional education and research from Northern Ontario.*

### Mission

*To improve global health equity through collaborative partnerships and by sharing expertise in social accountability, innovative health professional education and research for Northern, rural, and remote communities and Indigenous and Francophone populations.*

### Values

- Social Accountability (Including *Relevance, Quality, Cost-Effectiveness, and Equity*)
- Community Engagement
- Meaningful Partnerships
- Reciprocity
- Respect and Inclusiveness
- Innovation

### Goals

- Establish transnational partnerships
- Global Health opportunities for learners, faculty, and research
- Transnational, bi-directional research collaborations
- Advance global health equity

# **QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE: APPROACH TO INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS**

## **Who can initiate an international partnership exploration?**

Any NOSM University learner, faculty, staff, or program can initiate the exploration process for partnerships with institutions or organizations outside of Canada. **Exploring a partnership does not mean a formal partnership will be pursued or endorsed by NOSM University.** It is an assessment of whether NOSM University should establish a formal partnership with a prospective organization or institution.

Should the prospective partnership intend to include relations with Indigenous Nations, it should not be explored without engagement and help from the Office of the Associate Dean, Equity and Inclusion.

## **Who needs to be notified when an international partnership is being explored?**

If a learner, faculty, or staff is initiating an exploration of an international partnership they should **first report their intentions to their respective program and academic reporting structure.** For example, if a PGY1 in Family Medicine would like to explore an international partnership they should first notify their site director, then the program director and then the Associate Dean, PGME.

The **Global Health Coordinator** *must* be notified and can provide support to the partnership exploration process. The Global Health Coordinator reports to the **Vice Dean, Research, Innovation and International Relations** who will also be made aware of the prospective partnership. As the exploration moves forward, the **Director, Planning and Risk** will also be contacted to support this process.

Should the partnership intend to include relations with Indigenous Nations in Northern Ontario, the Associate Dean of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and other external parties representing Indigenous Nations, will be notified by the Global Health Coordinator.

## **What are the steps in international partnership exploration?**

All partnerships should first be explored using the three-step assessment process established by the NOSM University Advisory Group on Global Health and International Relations (**Figure 1**). The three-step process includes the identification of partners, ethical considerations and feasibility, risk and sustainability (**Table 1, 2 & 3**). Further reflective questions are at the discretion of the individual programs. Following the three-step process, it should be clear whether the proposed partnership will be Tier 1 (comprehensive) or Tier 2 (focused) (**Table 4**).



Individual programs are required to evaluate their desired partnerships using this framework. Justification for a partnership may be called upon, amended and reviewed should challenges arise.

Once a decision is made to pursue a partnership, the development of a detailed partnership framework through bilateral negotiations, will be guided by the program seeking the partnership, the Vice Dean, Research, Innovation and International Relations, the Global Health Coordinator and the Director of Risk and Liabilities.

Should the partnership include relations with Indigenous Nations in Northern Ontario, negotiations with the respective external parties representing those Indigenous Nations will also be required depending on the nature of the partnership. This could include direct negotiations with the Indigenous community (i.e., Fort Albany) or an Indigenous Nation representative organization (i.e., Nishnawbe Aski Nation).



**Figure 1. Pathway toward international partnerships**

Step 1: Identifying Partners 	Step 2: Ethical Considerations 	Step 3: Feasibility, Risk & Sustainability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who is this partnership with and how was it identified? (i.e. NOSM University or faculty, staff and learners or solicited partnership with NOSM University).</li> <li>Is there shared aspirations towards social accountability, values, academic principles and context?</li> <li>What do partner organizations and NOSM University have in common? What are the major differences?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider how introspection, social justice, humility solidarity, autonomy, beneficence and non-maleficence guide the partnership.</li> <li>What are the objectives, why is the partnership being pursued and how will it contribute to global health equity?</li> <li>Evaluate through a social accountability lens.</li> <li>What are the cross cultural considerations and impacts?</li> <li>How will this partnership be equitable?</li> <li>How will this partnership protect against harm?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scope of partnership activities (Tier 1 vs. 2).</li> <li>Resource and financial requirements.</li> <li>Risk and benefit assessment.</li> <li>Institutional capacity to fulfill and sustain partnership obligations.</li> </ul>

## STEP 1 – IDENTIFYING PARTNERS AND THEIR SUITABILITY TO PARTNER WITH NOSM UNIVERSITY

- Prospective partners may be sought out by NOSM University, pursued from existing relationships with faculty, staff and learners or may be solicited by organizations wishing to partner with NOSM University.
- Considerations for prospective partnerships should include shared aspiration towards social accountability, values, academic principles and contextual relevance.

**Table 1. Step 1 – Identifying partners and their suitability to partner with NOSM University.**

Reflective Question	Resources to consult
1. Who is the proposed partnership with and how was this partnership identified?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Source of partnership inquiry.</li> </ul>
2. How does the organization demonstrate a commitment to social accountability?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>World Health Organization's <b>Defining and Measuring the Social Accountability of Medical Schools</b>.</li> </ul>
3. What are the organization's values?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the partnership's shared values.</li> <li>Source: partner organization's website; vision, mission, purpose, value statements; strategic plan; organizational reports.</li> </ul>

<p><b>4. If this is an academic institution, what academic principles are identifiable and how does the institution realize its academic mission? (If this is not an academic institution how does the organization realize its mission?)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the academic structure of the institution across health professional training programs, research and service delivery activities.</li> <li><i>Source:</i> organization's website; vision, mission, purpose, value statements; strategic plan; reports; organizational structure.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. What is the geographical, cultural, racial, ethnic and socio-demographic context of the region the institution serves?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the population and region the organization serves. Consider health equity stratifiers reflective of the Social Determinants of Health.</li> </ul> <p><i>Sources:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Country Profiles</b></li> <li><b>World Health Organization's Global Health Observatory</b></li> <li><b>The World Bank's World Development Indicators database</b></li> <li><b>Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluations</b></li> <li><b>Canadian Government Travel and Tourism</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Will this partnership involve Indigenous nations in Northern Ontario and who else will need to be involved in this partnership?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify if there is interest in relations with Indigenous nations in Northern Ontario.</li> <li>Identify other Indigenous parties or organizations that will need to be engaged (i.e., specific community or representative organization).</li> <li><i>Source:</i> NOSM University Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Summary Reflection</i></b></p> <p><b>How does this prospective partner organization compare to NOSM University? What do they have in common and what are the major differences?</b></p>	<p><i>Sources:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NOSM University's vision, mission, purpose, strategic plan, values.</li> <li>NOSM University's Global Health Strategy and International Partnership Priorities document.</li> <li>NOSM University's education model (distributed medical education, cultural immersion, rural focus, Indigenous, Francophone, Primary Care, etc.)</li> </ul>

## STEP 2 – ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

- There are multiple approaches to an ethical appraisal for and within international partnerships, if necessary, please consider ethical dimensions beyond those proposed in this guidance.
- The NOSM University Advisory Group on Global Health and International Relations identified a focus, vision and mission statements, values and other important considerations for international partnerships. All of these should be considered at this step.
- The goal of step 2 is to establish an ethical foundation for the partnership; considerations for institutional and personal risk and liability will be covered in step 3.

**Table 2. Step 2 – Ethical considerations for international partnerships**

While answering these reflective questions consider ethical concepts such as introspection, social justice, humility, solidarity, autonomy, beneficence and non-maleficence.	
<p><u>Introspection</u>: What are the motives? Travel for leisure and personal exploration can waste global health work resources. Consider an anti-oppressive, anti-racist and anti-colonial analyses. How does privilege affect motives or how could this partnership add to the subjugation of the partner organization(s) and/or the developing or non-westernized world?</p> <p><u>Social Justice</u>: How does this partnership help to create a more just society and diminish gross, global inequity? Critically reflect on how the global society, the region, the communities, the people and stakeholders in this partnership and how will they be affected.</p> <p><u>Humility</u>: What is 'our' (collectively) general attitude towards 'our' place in the world? How is 'our' ignorance discouraging an openness to seek direction from the partner organization(s) and the rejection of bias, oppressive and colonial trends?</p> <p><u>Solidarity</u>: How are the objectives of this partnership aligned with the needs of communities or region? With respect to Canadian norms and if applicable, Indigenous Nations, do conflicting views of health and healthcare exist and why?</p>	<p><u>Autonomy</u>: How will the decision-making of the partnership be respected? How will the collective decision making of the communities this partnership is intended to benefit be respected?</p> <p><u>Beneficence</u>: How is the obligation 'to do good' being fulfilled? How is this partnership in the best interests of improving the well-being of others above all else?</p> <p><u>Non-maleficence</u>: What are the potential harms and risks to others from this partnership? What steps are being taken to minimize and prevent harm, risk, unintended consequences and prioritize the safety and well-being of those affected by this partnership?</p>

Reflective Question	Resources to consult
<b>1. What are the objectives of this partnership, why is it being pursued and how will it contribute to greater health equity?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Source of partnership inquiry.</li> </ul>
<b>2. How does social accountability guide this partnership?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the populations, communities and region that will be served.</li> <li>Identify the health needs, social needs and health inequities that will be addressed.</li> <li>Identify how the values of relevance, quality, cost-effectiveness and equity will guide this partnership.</li> <li>Identify how community engagement and stakeholders from the WHO's partnerships pentagram is involved in this partnership.</li> </ul> <p>Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>World Health Organization's <b>Defining and Measuring the Social Accountability of Medical Schools</b></li> <li>Towards Unity for Health's <b>Challenges and Opportunities for Partnership in Health Development</b></li> </ul>
<b>3. What cross-cultural considerations and impacts need to be accounted for?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider how diversity, anti-racism, equity and inclusiveness can guide this partnership.</li> <li>Identify all ethno-cultural groups and languages spoken in the region the organization serves.</li> <li>Identify measures to achieve cultural safety and address ethnocentrism.</li> <li>Identify key differences from Canadian norms and values that may exist between medical care and related academic structures (i.e., standards of care, resources, historical, religious, cultural and social norms, gender norms, political circumstances, laws, language, socio-economic, etc. ...).</li> </ul> <p>Source:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Canadian Government Travel and Tourism</b></li> </ul>



<b>4. How will this partnership be equitable?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify how this partnership will move beyond informing towards empowerment.</li> <li>• Identify how equity (not equality) is achieved.</li> <li>• Identify areas of reciprocity.</li> </ul> <p><i>Source:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>International Association of Public Participation Spectrum of Public Participation</b></li> </ul>
<b>5. How will this partnership protect against harms?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify mechanisms that will prevent ‘brain-drain,’ ‘savior complexes,’ voluntourism, ‘medical tourism’ and other unethical practices that exploit vulnerable populations.</li> </ul>
<b>6. Are there other important ethical dimensions and considerations?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider ethical lenses used in public health such as: Effectiveness, Proportionality, Necessity, Least infringement and Public justification.</li> </ul>

## References

1. Takala, Tuija. What Is Wrong with Global Bioethics? On the Limitations of the Four Principles Approach. **Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics: Vol. 10, Iss. 1**, (Jan 2001): 72-7. DOI:10.1017/S0963180101001098
2. Andrew D. Pinto, Ross E.G. Upshur. Global Health Ethics for Students. (March 2009) Vol. 9, Iss 8. <https://doi-org.proxy.lib.nosm.ca/10.1111/j.1471-8847.2007.00209.x>
3. Solomon R Benatar,\* Abdallah S Daar, and Peter A Singer. Global Health Challenges: The Need for an Expanded Discourse on Bioethics. **PLoS Med.** 2005 Jul; 2(7): e143. doi: **10.1371/journal.pmed.0020143**.



## STEP 3 – FEASIBILITY, RISKS, BENEFITS, SUSTAINABILITY AND TYPE OF PARTNERSHIP

- Step 3 will detail feasibility, benefits, risks, and sustainability and dictate whether the partnership should be pursued as Tier 1 (comprehensive) or Tier 2 (focused) (**Table 4**).

**Table 3. Feasibility, risk, and sustainability assessment**

Reflective Question	Resources to consult
<b>1. Describe the scope of the partnership and whether this should be considered a Tier 1 (comprehensive) or Tier 2 (focused) partnership.</b> <i>*may revise partnership type as new/ more information becomes available.</i> <i>**partnerships can be fluid over time between Tier 1 and Tier 2.</i> <i>***see Table 4</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and describe the main activities of the partnership.</li> <li>Identify whether the partnership will involve education, research, or service delivery (provide specific details for each domain).</li> <li>Identify whether partnership will include learners, faculty, or staff (provide specific details).</li> <li>Consider what existing and/or additional responsibilities, resources and structures will be needed to meaningfully oversee and support the partnership.</li> <li>Identify a projected timeframe for the partnership.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Does NOSM University have the resources that will be required to meaningfully support this partnership for the projected timeframe? Can the partner institution sustain this partnership?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify what human resources (staff, faculty, researchers, learners), physical resources and financial costs are required and whether that capacity currently exists.</li> <li>Linking human resources, physical resources, and financial costs to specific activities of the partnership may help to understand what is sustainable for the projected timeframe.</li> <li>Review and encourage the same from the partner organization.</li> </ul>
<b>3. What will be NOSM University's financial and resource commitments? What will be the partner's financial and resource commitments?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a budget that identifies projected financial costs and in-kind supports provided by NOSM University.</li> <li>It may be practical to identify costs across the domains of education, research, and service delivery and to consider a value analysis.</li> <li>Review and encourage the same from the partner organization.</li> </ul>
<b>4. What are the real, perceived, or potential benefits of engaging in this partnership to NOSM University, learners, faculty, staff and partner?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the benefits linked to the partnership's main activities.</li> <li>Describe the benefits in terms of education, research, or service delivery (provide specific details for each domain).</li> <li>Describe how the benefits will affect NOSM University as an institution, learners, faculty and/or staff (provide specific details).</li> </ul>

Reflective Question	Resources to consult
<p><b>5. What are the real, perceived, or potential risks and liabilities engaging in this partnership to NOSM University, learners, faculty, staff and partner? How will these be mitigated?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risks and liabilities may include, but not limited to, institutional reputation, medico-legal (medical licensing, malpractice insurance/risk), personal health and personal safety and professionalism.</li> <li>• Consider risks and liabilities related to: <i>NOSM University/institutional, learners, faculty and staff.</i></li> <li>• <i>Institutional risks</i> should balance the harms/benefits from association with countries and organizations based on human rights records, ethical and transparent financial processes, institutional accreditation, accountability, level, and quality of supervision for learners, research ethics and other legal concerns.</li> <li>• <i>Personal health risks</i> include individual health concerns, as part of a health care team, availability of health insurance (travel, health, life, disability) and ability to respond to a health emergency.</li> <li>• <i>Personal safety risks</i> include navigating an unfamiliar environment, VISAS / entry &amp; exit requirements, travel advisories and medical malpractice insurance and ability to respond to a variety of emergencies (i.e., political instability, being detained or natural disaster).</li> <li>• For each real or perceived risk detail how, each will be mitigated and/or provide justification for accepting the risks in terms of the real or perceived benefits.</li> </ul> <p><i>Sources:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Government of Canada ‘Canada to the World’</b> (foreign policy, international development, and relations)</li> <li>• <b>Government of Canada Travel Advice and Advisories</b></li> <li>• <b>Government of Canada Health &amp; Safety Outside of Canada</b></li> <li>• <b>Canadian Embassies and Consulates</b></li> <li>• <b>CMPA providing care outside of Canada</b></li> <li>• <b>CDC Traveller’s Health</b></li> </ul> <p><i>Human Rights Reports:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>United Nations Human Rights Reports by Country</b></li> <li>• <b>Human Rights Watch</b></li> <li>• <b>Amnesty International</b></li> <li>• <b>United States Country Reports on Human Rights Practices</b></li> </ul>



**Summary Reflections**

Does NOSM University have the financial capacity to meaningfully fulfill and sustain its obligations for the proposed partnership timeframe?

Are there any institutional, learner, faculty or staff risks and liabilities that cannot be reasonably addressed and that outweigh the benefits of this partnership?

Based on the feasibility assessment should any adjustments be made to the scope of this partnership?

Will the partnership be Tier 1 or Tier 2?

**Table 4. Tier 1 vs. Tier 2 Partnerships**

Tier 1 Partnership	Tier 2 Partnership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Significant overlap in values, goals, and contextual relevance.</li><li>• Comprehensive in scope.</li><li>• Covers education, research, and service delivery.</li><li>• Participation of UME, PGME and Health Sciences learners; faculty across all divisions; and researchers</li><li>• Forward thinking – NOSM as a standalone University</li><li>• Very stringent on partnership conditions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Limited overlap in values, goals, contextual relevance</li><li>• Specific and focused in scope</li><li>• Covers a limited number of specific actives in either education, research, or service delivery</li><li>• Limited participation of UME, PGME and Health Sciences learners, faculty, and researchers</li><li>• Forward thinking – NOSM as a standalone University</li><li>• Flexible partnership conditions</li></ul> <p><b>*Could develop over time into a Tier 1 Partnership</b></p>





## ■ CONCLUSION

If the summary of the reflection and decision-making process is in favour of establishing a partnership, the next step is to:

- Inform the Global Health Coordinator and Vice Dean, Research, Innovation, and International Relations of the findings.
- Contact Director, Planning and Risk that a formal, binding partnership agreement is desired.
- Engage in bilateral negotiations that are transparent and allow the partner organization to be informed about all the details of the partnership and consent to it.

If relations with Indigenous Nations in Northern Ontario are being considered, you must also notify the Office of the Associate Dean, Equity and Inclusion. In addition to bilateral negotiations between NOSM University and the prospective partner, the respective Indigenous Nations must be directly involved in establishing this partnership.



