



Guidelines for Developing Grow Your Own Educator Partnership Agreements

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What is a memorandum of understanding (MOU)?

A memorandum of understanding (MOU)¹ is a written agreement between two or more parties that expresses a collective course of action. It is typically not a legal document. Rather, it is a way to declare the shared intentions, goals, and activities of a partnership, as well as the roles of involved parties.

MOUs can pave the way for successful partnerships by:

- Formalizing partnerships
- Helping to reduce miscommunication and misunderstanding between partners
- Clarifying partner roles and responsibilities
- Defining what data will be used to measure progress
- Naming what data will be shared or protected

What are the key features of a MOU?

Effective MOUs often include the following:

- A description of the purpose and scope of the program at the beginning of the document
- A description of the purpose and scope of the partnership
- A list of key terms used in the agreement
- A list of the parties involved and their intended roles, responsibilities, and expectations; a descriptive example of what strong partners look like and do may be helpful
- An articulation of the partnership activities
- A list of all investments (time, finances, resources) required of partners, including start dates and deadlines; a description of the partnership timeline may be helpful
- The names, titles, and contact information of the persons from both parties responsible for overseeing the implementation of the agreement

¹ Memorandum of agreement (MOA) is another common term for this type of agreement and is often used interchangeably with memorandum of understanding.

The MOU should contain all of the above elements in a structure that is clear for all parties. That way, it can be used as a guide for partners and programs, and it can be referred to as often as needed without confusion. This could mean adding charts or other visual aids to the contract or attaching supplementary documents that will be useful for understanding the MOU.

What is involved in the MOU process?

Designing and agreeing on MOU terms can vary depending on the program and partners involved, but there are some key phases that typically occur during the MOU process:

- A partnership is chosen
- A new MOU is created
- The MOU is sent to necessary parties, including partners, for review, clarity, and possible negotiation
- When all parties are satisfied with the MOU, they officially agree by signing
- The signed agreement moves on to reviewers, as necessary for final approval, and is saved for future reference

What does a MOU look like?

Below are sample MOAs and MOUs for GYO and related partnerships, including two templates that could be used to inform the development of an MOU to meet your partnership's needs.

[Sample 1 \(Contract Format\): Expectations for program participant-nonprofit foundation partnerships](#) Partnership (developed by the Oklahoma City Public Schools Foundation)

[Sample 2 \(Contract Format\): Expectations for teacher preparation program-school district partnerships](#) (developed by the Woodring Highline Bilingual Teaching Fellows Program)

[Sample 3: Expectations for teacher preparation program-school district partnerships](#) (developed by the Washington State Professional Educator Standards Board)

[Sample 4: Expectations for teacher preparation program-school district partnerships](#) (developed by Prepared To Teach, Bank Street College of Education)