



# North America—Education & Research Partnership Opportunities

## U.S. Government priorities

### Priorities

- **Quality, Costs & Transparency:** The U.S. Department of Education has proposed a comprehensive rating system for all post-secondary institutions. The system will include a range of indicators (yet to be agreed upon) that would provide students and families information about the quality, affordability, and innovativeness of institutions.
- **Equity & Opportunity:** The U.S. continues to be focused on expanding educational access and increasing completion rates, especially among under-represented groups, in both K-12 and higher education. Federal initiatives to address these issues include the *First in the World Fund* (\$75 million in 2014), *America's College Promise* (funding requested in 2016 budget), School Improvement Grants (\$506 million in 2014), among others.
- **Science & Technology:** The U.S. Government's proposed multi-agency science and technology priorities for the FY 2016 Budget are advanced manufacturing and industries of the future; clean energy; earth observations; global climate change; information technology and high performance computing; innovation in life sciences, biology and neuroscience; national and homeland security; and R&D for informed policy-making and management. Improving STEM education in schools is also a federal priority.
- **Early Learning:** Improving and expanding access to early childhood learning opportunities has been a multi-year priority for the U.S. Department of Education. The 2016 budget requests \$750 million for Preschool Development grants for states, plus \$75 billion over 10 years to support the Preschool for All initiative.
- **Increasing Support for Educators:** Numerous federal programs exist to fund state and local initiatives that recruit, support, reward, and/or advance the careers of teachers and leaders.

### Emerging Trends

- **Increasing Exchange:** Through Austrade, Australia recently became a country partner in *Generation Study Abroad*, a State Department-supported initiative to increase to 600K the number of American students studying overseas by 2020.

- **Accreditation:** Though accreditation is not a federal responsibility in the U.S., the federal government is considering strategies to more tightly control quality at for-profit institutions and all institutions that prepare teachers. New “Gainful Employment” regulations may impact Australian institutions that enrol U.S. students in career-oriented programs.
- **Innovation:** Many U.S. institutions are introducing flexible new degree programs in non-traditional formats, including competency-based programs and blended or hybrid programs, often created in collaboration with local employers. A similar trend has emerged in the schools sector, where high schools (often charters) join with institutes of higher education and industry partners to offer unique hybrid diploma/degree programs.
- **Joint/Dual Degrees:** Survey results indicate that U.S. Institutions are offering more international joint- and dual-degrees than ever before, with top partnering countries including China, France, Germany and South Korea. Most such programs cater to host countries’ students, however, and enrol far fewer U.S. students.
- **Internships.** There is an increasing demand for internships abroad. U.S. students need to earn academic credit for workplace activities in order to use U.S. federal aid to pay their tuition & fees while abroad.

## Canadian Government priorities

### Priorities

- **Asserting Global Research Excellence:** The Canada First Research Excellence fund will provide \$1.5 billion in competitive grants to post-secondary institutions throughout Canada to “help them excel globally in research areas that create long-term economic advantages for Canada”. \$350 million will be available in the inaugural round (closing June 2015).
- **Increasing Exchange:** Canada’s hopes to increase outgoing and incoming mobility substantially in the next decade. The Canadian Bureau of International Education has pledged to increase Canada’s international student population from 239K to 450K by 2022. CBIE and other organizations frequently cite Australia’s outreach and success in Asian markets as an example for Canadian institutions.
- **Research Priorities:** Canada has identified five key research priorities: environment and agriculture, health and life sciences, natural resources and energy, information and communications technologies, and advanced manufacturing.

### Emerging Trends

- **Visa Issues:** Universities are concerned about a major change to the Canadian visa system, which may disadvantage international students seeking permanent residence status after earning their credentials and exhausting their post-graduate work permits.
- **Research Internships:** Canada’s MITACS Globalink program offers two-way mobility opportunities between Canada and 8 partner countries (including China, Vietnam, India, and Brazil) for undergraduate and graduate students interested in undertaking research projects with university faculty mentors. Globalink sends 200 students from Canada to eight partner countries and accepts 800 students into Canada each year through the program, which has an annual budget of about C\$10 million (largely from federal sources).

## Opportunities for Australia

There is **ample** opportunity in the U.S. and in Canada for Australian institutions to promote themselves as credible collaborators in research and exchange, to establish research partnerships with U.S. federal funding, and to showcase innovations and successes in teaching, learning, and administration. There are also many lessons to be learned about innovative delivery models, business models, and policy initiatives at the government and institution level, in both schools and tertiary education.

- Soliciting U.S. federal research funding for collaborative projects, including from agencies like the National Science Foundation (NSF), National Institute of Health, defence agencies, etc.
  - Universities will have the opportunity to co-fund, with NSF, early career researchers successful in the East Asia and Pacific Summer Institutes Program (EAPSI) from 2016.
- Showcasing innovative policies, programs, pedagogies, etc. at conferences and seminars of relevant peak bodies and other groups.
- Establishing joint- and dual-degrees, particularly in disciplines where research collaboration already exists, or where Australia has a clear research strength/advantage.
- Engaging with Institute for International Education (US) or CBIE (Canada) to participate in their efforts to increase mobility.

## Our key goals

- Expand bilateral cooperation with North America and multilateral cooperation with the Asia-Pacific region
  - Identify opportunities for collaboration (often with Austrade)
- Raise Australia's profile as a quality provider of education and research and as a partner for cooperation in policy, education and research collaboration.
  - Promote Endeavour Scholarships in the US and Canada
  - Engage in high-level dialogue to communicate Australian education developments and strengths to various audiences, including government agencies, peak bodies, research organizations, and individual universities and colleges

## Key activities and events

- NAFSA Conference and U.S. Higher Education Partnerships Fair (May 2015, Boston)
- BIO International Convention 2015 (15-18 June Philadelphia)
- US-Australia Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) on Science and Technology (Nov 2015, DC)
  - Enabling Technologies Technical Meeting (11-14 May, DC)
- National Academies' Unconventional Hydrocarbon Development Roundtable (Oct 2015, DC)
- CHEA International Quality Group Meeting (Jan/Feb 2016)
- Government-to-government education policy dialogues (Videoconference, Quarterly)