



Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs)

A Memorandum of Understanding among a shared print program's partner libraries is integral to establishing and reinforcing member libraries' commitment to the program and each other. It allows for the development of trust and shared understanding of [policies and practices](#).

Best Practice

This best practice recommends elements that should be included in any shared print program memorandum of understanding (MOU) and points to additional resources that provide more detailed guidance and examples for the creation of MOUs. Unlike other Best Practices documents, this one for MOUs does not establish Good, Better, and Best levels because an MOU is a governance/policy document.

Recommended Elements of an MOU for Shared Print Programs¹

1. Program description, including Vision, Goals, and Scope (see [BP for Policy Development and Program Management](#), [BP for Collection Scope](#), [Scope discussion in the Shared Print Toolkit](#))
2. Eligibility
3. Participant member types
4. Method of entry and withdrawal of participating organizations (see [BP for Exiting a Shared Print Program](#))

5. Description of Governance and Operations model (see [Shared Print Toolkit Governance and Staffing](#))
6. Description of the business model and financial obligations (see [BP for Policy Development and Program Management](#))
7. Method by which retained materials will be selected, identified, validated, and stored (see [Shared Print Toolkit Retention Criteria](#))
8. Duration of retention commitments (see [BP for Retention Period and Survivability](#))
9. Definition of ownership and requirements for preservation and maintenance of retained materials (see [BP for Preservation](#))
10. Method by which retained materials may be transferred among partner libraries or withdrawn (see [BP for Transferring Commitments](#))
11. Method by which access to retained materials will be provided (see [BP for Resource Sharing and Access](#))
12. Any other responsibilities of participating organizations
13. Process through which the shared print program could be dissolved
14. Method by which the MOU may be amended and/or reviewed

Relationship of MOU to Other Documents

A shared print program will likely have a number of separate policy and procedure documents that build upon the foundation established in the MOU. Therefore, the MOU should provide enough information to guide further development of the program but should not contain detailed policies and procedures, as doing so could impede the approval process within individual organizations where MOUs must be reviewed by legal counsel. Additionally, such detailed policies and procedures will likely need to be adjusted over time due to changes in factors such as digitization technology, metadata standards, and resource sharing practices, none of which should necessarily require revisiting the agreement as a whole.

Examples of Existing MOUs

- Council of Prairie and Pacific University Libraries Shared Print Archive Network (COPPUL-SPAN)
- Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries Shared Print Trust
- Eastern Academic Scholars' Trust (EAST)
- Florida Academic Repository (FLARE)
- HathiTrust
- Maine Shared Collections Cooperative
- Statewide California Electronic Library Consortium (SCELC)

1. These elements are largely drawn from Revitt, Matthew. 2014. Shared Print Agreements for Monographs: A User's Manual. Library Staff Publications. 22.

https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/lib_staffpub/22.

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