NSE Terms of Participation (2013)

Established in 1968, the National Student Exchange is a not-for-profit, membership consortium of regionally-accredited, baccalaureate-granting colleges and universities in the United States, Canada, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The campuses have joined together for the purpose of exchanging students and providing opportunities for inter-institutional cooperative programming.

Most campuses have a mission for globalization, cultural diversity, or other off-campus learning initiatives. The National Student Exchange is a program that responds to these initiatives. Thinking globally begins for NSE students by crossing state, regional, provincial, and cultural borders to experience a change of people, place and opportunity. The National Student Exchange takes them out of their comfort zones and challenges them to experience life from a different point of view. They return home with greater maturity, flexibility, self-confidence, and decision-making skills.

The changing diversity in culture and ethnicity across the United States, its territories, and Canada presents numerous challenges and opportunities for tomorrow's citizens and leaders. Through their exchange, NSE students gain insight into the historical and cultural makeup of different regions, improve their communications skills with individuals from different backgrounds, and prepare themselves to live and work in a culturally diverse society. NSE participants have found their exchanges culturally enriching, academically rewarding, and one of the most significant experiences of their undergraduate education.

The National Student Exchange provides:

- Inter-institutional exchange/study opportunities at a reasonable cost
- Exchange opportunities for the multitude of undergraduate students for whom an overseas experience may not be appropriate, comfortable or affordable
- Access to a wide array of courses, programs, co-ops, internships, field experiences, service learning, resident assistant exchange, honors programs, and study abroad opportunities offered by member campuses
- Intellectual and personal challenges to students in new geographic areas
- Sharing of institutional resources that can open up opportunities for creative and cost-effective programming, research projects, and expanded utilization of facilities among member campuses

Exchanges are multilateral and tuition-reciprocal offering a great deal of flexibility for placements. The National Student Exchange is funded through institutional membership fees and student application fees, administered by a Central Office staff, and governed by a Council elected from within the membership.

The values that guide the National Student Exchange in meeting the diverse needs of our students, coordinators, and member colleges and universities are: excellence in our performance, sensitivity, respect, cooperation, and service to member institutions and their students.

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The National Student Exchange (hereafter referred to as NSE) and the institution entering into agreement with NSE (hereafter referred to as the contracting institution) agree to be bound by the policies and procedures detailed in the *NSE Handbook* and summarized in the following *NSE Terms of Participation* regarding the exchange of students by and between the contracting member colleges and universities.

Tuition Reciprocity

The National Student Exchange is a tuition-reciprocal exchange program that utilizes two plans for tuition and fees payment in order to be responsive to the disparate administrative and legal requirements under which institutions of higher learning are able to accommodate such reciprocity. Each contracting institution determines the tuition and fee payment plan(s) under which it can operate and may change that plan annually (impacting the subsequent year's exchanges) with due notification to the NSE Central Office. Institutional membership rosters, including payment plans utilized, are posted to the NSE web site.

Payment Plan A

Under this payment plan, the exchange student pays the resident (in-state or in-province) tuition and fees of the host campus directly to that campus.

Payment Plan B

Under this payment plan, the student pays normal tuition and fees of the home campus directly to that campus. Students who normally pay non-resident tuition and fees to their home campus will continue to do so while on exchange. The student enrolls at the host campus neither paying tuition and fees to the host campus nor having money sent from the home campus to the host campus for payment of those fees. Plan B students are expected, however, to pay to their host campus fees that are assessed as a condition of enrollment in specific courses (i.e., laboratory fees, art and photography supplies, field studies, student teaching, etc.).

Regardless of which payment plan is utilized, students also pay the costs for room and meals to their host campus and are responsible for their own personal expenses, including transportation to and from the host campus.

Administration and Governance

NSE Central Office

The NSE Central Office provides on-going guidance and support for member campuses; communicates with member institutions; maintains consortium files and financial records; develops and distributes, in print and electronic format, promotional materials and publications; maintains a contact directory for campus coordinators; sponsors several Internet ListServs; orients new coordinators to their NSE responsibilities; coordinates a mentoring program for new coordinators; maintains extensive web resources including a password-protected site for campus coordinators; plans and executes the Annual Placement Conference; conducts program evaluations; develops and expands the membership network; and represents NSE to prospective member campuses, educational associations, government agencies, and other appropriate constituents.

NSE Council

National Student Exchange governance is provided by a Council that is composed of seven individuals, five of whom are elected by and represent each of the regions in which NSE operates. The remaining two members are the President and Vice President of NSE. Ad hoc additions to the Council are made as deemed necessary. The purpose of the Council is to serve as directors of the corporation and to assist with program development and decision making in the NSE Central Office.

Membership

Membership is open to regionally-accredited, baccalaureate-level colleges and universities in the United States, its territories, and Canada that are willing to provide administrative and financial resources necessary to NSE program implementation and operation. Acceptance of new members is based largely on the consortium's desire to provide academic, cultural, ethnic, and geographic diversity to existing exchange options and to broaden institutional representation in areas of high student interest. Institutional membership rosters are posted to the NSE web site.

Membership Obligations

NSE Policies and Procedures

The contracting institution agrees to administer its exchange program in compliance with the policies and procedures detailed in the *NSE Handbook* and summarized in the *NSE Terms of Participation*. Any digression from NSE policy and procedure must be detailed in writing, appended to the *NSE Membership Agreement,* and be approved by the National Student Exchange.

Campus Coordinator

Each contracting institution designates an individual to serve as coordinator for the campus NSE program. The extent to which an institution takes full advantage of the opportunities offered through NSE membership is largely determined by the coordinator who must stimulate the interest of prospective exchange participants and provide a framework in which the exchange program will be administered by the institution. NSE responsibilities are similar to those of individuals who coordinate study abroad or international exchanges on the campus. The NSE coordinator is responsible for:

- administering all aspects of NSE at the institution as defined in the *NSE Handbook* and summarized in this document
- serving as the liaison with the NSE Central Office, with other NSE member institutions, and with NSE exchange participants
- serving as a liaison with campus administrative, academic and student services personnel
- abiding by the *Principles of Professional Practice for NSE Coordinators*

Coordinator Responsibilities

Outgoing Students

The NSE campus coordinator is responsible for coordinating all procedures related to sending students out on exchange and acting as their advocate in dealing with the various administrative offices such as registration, financial aid, fee payment, and other campus-related services. Responsibilities include promoting the program; distributing information and materials; approving and selecting applicants; preparing for placement; pre-placement advising; placing students; ensuring that advising agreements have been completed; and, for Plan B (home payment) students, arranging for tuition and fee payment billings.

Incoming Students

The NSE campus coordinator is responsible for coordinating all procedures related to accepting and enrolling incoming exchange students and acting as their advocate in dealing with the various administrative offices such as admissions, registration, financial aid, fee payment, housing, and other campus-related services. Responsibilities include providing information regarding on-campus housing (if available), enrollment and registration; orienting incoming students to the campus; verifying their enrollment by the end of the third week of each term; monitoring enrollment throughout the term; serving as a home away from home; verifying the student has no outstanding financial obligations at the end of exchange; and informing students of necessary check-out procedures as well as procedures for procuring an official transcript of their exchange work.

Returning Students

The NSE campus coordinator is responsible for maintaining contact with their students during exchange; forwarding appropriate re-entry and registration information; and ensuring that the work completed at the host campus is credited to the student's permanent record as identified in the advising agreement.

Requests for Information

It is the responsibility of the NSE campus coordinator to cooperate fully, and in a timely manner, to requests made by the NSE Central Office for the submission of on-line and printed information necessary to ensure effective and accurate communication and information relative to the exchange of students. The NSE campus coordinator is responsible for the accuracy or completeness of the information submitted on behalf of the contracting institution. The contracting institution agrees to allow NSE to distribute these materials in print and/or electronic format.

Coordinator Responsibilities, continued

Reports and Evaluations

The contracting institution agrees to cooperate in a timely manner with the NSE Central Office requests for information related to evaluation of the exchange program and its services to students and member universities.

Annual Placement Conference

NSE coordinators are required to attend the Annual Placement Conference usually held during the first or second week of March. At the NSE conference campus coordinators will make placement decisions on more than 2000 students who have applied for exchange for all or part of the subsequent academic year. All member campuses are expected to be ready to both send and receive students at this conference. Placements can be made only on site during the conference.

Coordinators who encounter unexpected or emergency circumstances that prevent them from conference attendance must make arrangements for someone to manage their placements (outgoing and incoming) at the conference as well as pay a fee, the amount determined annually by the NSE Council, to be represented in the placement process. While the primary conference activity is placement of students for the subsequent year, the conference offers the opportunity for in-service training; panels and presentations; workshops; and discussion of policy, procedure and matters of consortium business.

Financial Obligations

Annual Membership Fees

NSE assesses an annual membership fee, the amount of which is determined each year by the NSE Council. The NSE membership/fiscal year is July 1 through June 30. Ninety (90) days prior to the beginning of the membership year, the contracting institution is billed by NSE. Fees are payable July 1 and are non-refundable. Fees are owed regardless of subsequent withdrawal. Late fees are assessed for payments made after September 1. Any institution that has not paid its fees by December 31 may have its membership terminated.

Student Application Fees

The contracting institution is responsible for remitting the NSE application fee it has collected from each student for whom the campus enters an on-line placement request. The amount of the NSE application fee is determined each year by the NSE Council. The obligation for fee payment is based on the date the placement is entered on line, not the period of time for which the student actually exchanges. Fees are owed regardless of placement outcome (accepted or rejected by the host campus), placements declined, placements accepted and later cancelled because the student has not maintained eligibility, or withdrawal after placement acceptance. Fees are due, in the aggregate, in the NSE Central Office July 1 for applications received from May 1-April 30 of the previous year. Late fees are assessed for payments received after September 1. Any institution that has not paid its fees by December 31 may have its membership terminated.

Obligations to Students Upon Membership Termination

Whether the member institution cancels its membership or has its membership terminated for failure to pay annual membership fees or student application fees, the institution must fulfill its obligation to both outgoing and incoming exchange students in accordance with this *NSE Terms of Participation*. That includes students whose exchanges have already begun prior to the notice of termination as well as students whose exchanges had been negotiated, but not yet begun, prior to the notice of termination.

Exchange Policies and Procedures

Eligibility Criteria for Exchange

It is the responsibility of the contracting institution to determine the eligibility of its outgoing exchange students within parameters stated below. Participation in the National Student Exchange is a privilege, not a right. At minimum, to qualify for participation in the National Student Exchange, a student must have the following requirements at the time of application and in the term immediately prior to exchange:

- be a full-time student at the home campus
- have a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 (4.0 scale)
- be in good academic standing
- have no incomplete grades from previous terms
- have no current or pending probationary status due to academic dishonesty or misconduct
- have no outstanding financial obligations to the home campus
- have no current or pending probationary status or disciplinary action for violation of codes of student conduct
- not be on probation, parole, or have pending legal judgments
- meet any additional requirements of the home institution
- meet any additional stated requirements of the host institution (e.g., higher GPA for admission to certain programs, language proficiency at some member institutions, or submission of portfolio or taped audition for fine arts programs)

Assurance of Non-Discrimination

Application forms and procedures of the contracting institution shall conform to federal, state and institutional Affirmative Action/Title IX guidelines. Application forms shall conform to institutional policies and to the policies set forth in the *NSE Handbook*. Nothing in the application and selection process shall discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, color, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, or disability.

Placements

Most students are placed by coordinators at the Annual Placement Conference held in March. Placement decisions are governed by the limitations on the number of students some institutions may send and receive. Additional placements may be negotiated between coordinators following the conference or at mid-year. Applying students are accepted by the host campuses on a space-available basis. Since applicants have been approved for exchange by their home coordinators, no exchange of credentials is necessary at the conference and no additional admissions review and approval process takes place at the host institution following placement with the exception of courses, majors, or programs that may require a portfolio, tape audition, or other evidence of level of competency.

Students accept or decline their placements using NSE's *Placement Acceptance Form*. When the student accepts a placement, it constitutes a contract for exchange. Exchanges shall proceed for the payment Plan (A or B) and period of time designated on the *Placement Acceptance Form* unless the student has failed to maintain basic NSE eligibility qualifications or has been determined to be otherwise ineligible to participate by the sending institution.

Exchange Balances

NSE does not require any institutional or numerical exchange reciprocity or balance of trade. Some campuses, however, must balance their incoming with their outgoing students; some campuses receive more students than they send; and others send more students than they receive. The contracting institution determines the numbers of students sent or received as well as any balancing of numbers out and numbers in and the time frame in which the balance must be achieved. Most campuses that balance their exchanges do so over a multi-year period rather than term to term or year to year. From the perspective of NSE, each exchange year is considered a separate entity. Spaces are not owed to or from a campus from year to year.

Exchange Policies and Procedures, continued

Advising Agreement

It is the responsibility of the home campus coordinator to inform students about the necessity of securing an approved and signed advising agreement. The advising agreement is a document that lists all of the possible courses to be taken during exchange and a designation as to how the completed courses will fit into the student's academic program. It is the student's responsibility to secure such an agreement prior to leaving the home campus for exchange. The advising agreement acts as a formal contract between the student and the home institution that courses satisfactorily completed under the agreement are applicable to the student's home academic program as stated.

Release of Information/Family Rights and Privacy Act

In compliance with federal regulations under the *Family Rights and Privacy Act of 1974*, students are responsible for specifying persons or agents who may have access to their records. As part of the placement acceptance process, NSE students give permission to their home and host institution NSE campus coordinators and to the NSE Central Office to collect and release information (e.g., letters of recommendation, transcripts, financial status with the campus, report of conduct, and medical/counseling records) as it is appropriate to their exchange participation, continuation, or termination. Students also agree that home and host campuses may disclose to one another, to the NSE Central office, and to parents, legal guardian, or spouse any information that may impact their mental health or physical well-being while on exchange. The "exchange" begins with placement and concludes with posting the host campus exchange work on the home campus transcript.

Host Campus Registration and Course Access

Priority registration for incoming NSE students is welcome. If that is not possible, NSE students should register for courses in the same manner and time frame as the institution's currently enrolled, degree-seeking students of the same class standing. Registration in courses is based on availability of offerings and cannot be guaranteed. Students are expected to have a flexible academic plan and to meet all course pre-requisites and co-requisites.

Host Campus Benefits

Exchange students, whether on Plan A or Plan B and no matter what enrollment status they are given, shall be afforded all rights and benefits (e.g., access to health, recreational and athletic facilities; participation in student organizations; access to university support services and offices, etc.) in the same manner as any student native to the host institution. The privilege of exchange may be revoked if the student fails to:
1) remain enrolled full-time at the host institution, 2) maintain acceptable academic standards defined by both the home and host institutions, 3) abide by the behavioral standards of the host and/or home institution, and/or 4) pay financial obligations to the home and/or host campus.

Rules and Regulations

It is the responsibility of the host campus NSE coordinator to inform incoming exchange students of the host institution's academic regulations and standards; financial obligations and payment policies; student code of conduct; policies and procedures specific to their enrollment as an NSE student; and safety, security, and emergency procedures of the institution. Failure of the student to conform to rules and regulations may result in the termination of exchange participation and further disciplinary action may be taken by the student's host and/or home campuses.

Outstanding Financial Obligations

Home and host coordinators are expected to work together to resolve debts incurred by students during their participation in NSE. Failure to make full payment of all debts to the home or host institutions (e.g., tuition, fees, room meals, unreturned equipment, over-due short-term emergency loan, lost library books, or other obligations required by the home or host institution) may result in the cancellation of registration or disenrollment at the host campus in the subsequent term or by the home institution following the period of exchange at the host campus. All financial obligations must be fulfilled by the student to both the home and host institutions prior to further enrollment at either institution, releasing of transcripts from either institution, and/or awarding diplomas.

Exchange Policies and Procedures, continued

Transcripts
The host campus generates a transcript for the exchange work in the same manner as it does for its regularly enrolled students. It is the responsibility of the student to request and pay (if applicable) for an official transcript to be sent to the appropriate office at the home institution at the completion of exchange. For financial aid purposes, transcripts may be required by the home campus at the completion of each term.

Recording Exchange Work/Completing the Exchange
The permanent record at the home campus is incomplete until a host campus transcript is received and the exchange work is posted to the home campus transcript. It is the responsibility of the home campus coordinator to verify that host campus transcripts have been received and that the work completed on exchange has been entered on the permanent record at the home institution and credited to the student's program of study as identified in the advising agreement.

Institutional Waivers and Releases
Contracting institutions are strongly encouraged to utilize for NSE students, as they would for their own students studying abroad, institutional waivers, disclaimers, and/or hold-harmless statements as well as documentation that identifies the responsibilities assumed by students when they participate in NSE.

Insurance
NSE does not require and does not provide health insurance for exchange students. It is the student's responsibility, therefore, to ensure that he/she has adequate coverage for the period and place of exchange. Home and/or host campuses may require purchase of such insurance.

U.S. Department of Education Title IV Student Assistance
This section provides information regarding the administration of U.S. Federal financial aid for students participating in exchange programs under the auspices of the National Student Exchange. Student eligibility for Title IV funds is defined in the U. S. Department of Education's regulations at 34 CFR 668.32.

Students may participate in NSE for a single term, academic year, or calendar year and are expected to return to their home institutions to complete their degree program following their exchange. The NSE student must be enrolled full-time at the host institution.

The NSE member institution responsible for disbursement of student aid and monitoring eligibility requirements is governed by NSE policy related to the campus at which the student pays tuition and fees.

Application, Award, and Disbursement
In accordance with NSE policy, Title IV funds are awarded by, and disbursed from, the campus where tuition and fees are paid.

- **Plan A** – For Plan A (in-state or in-province tuition and fees paid to the host campus), aid is applied for and disbursed from the student's host college or university in the same manner as the institution funds its native students.

- **Plan A Exception** – A member campus may choose to fund its own outgoing Plan A students. If the campus chooses to do so, NSE policy requires that the campus also fund its incoming Plan A students.

- **Plan B** – Plan B (normal tuition and fees paid to the home campus) students apply for, and have their aid disbursed from, their home institution. Plan B students should remain registered at their home institution in a holding course with full-time enrollment.

- **To and From Canada** – Students going to or coming from a college or university in Canada are always funded by their home campus regardless of whether or not the student chooses to exchange under Plan A or Plan B.

U.S. Department of Education Title IV Student Assistance, continued

Real Budget

Awards, regardless of whether they are disbursed from the home or host NSE member, should be based on a real budget that includes tuition and fees at the institution where they are paid and on the room, meals, incidentals, host campus travel, and transportation from the home campus to the host university.

With the exception of costs for transportation to the location of the host campuses, NSE's on-line *Campus Budgets* detail the real budgets for each of its member colleges and universities including tuition and fees, room, meals, books/supplies, personal expenses, travel, and health insurance. For any U.S. student funded by a U.S. home institution budgets must be consistent and in compliance with Title IV guidance.

NSE Membership Agreement

The United States Department of Education (the Department) has determined that the information included in the *NSE Membership Agreement* meets the requirements for a consortium agreement as provided in the Department's regulations at 34 CFR 668.5(a) *Written arrangements between eligible institutions,* and is considered to be by and between eligible NSE member institutions. Separate or individual (institution: institution) agreements are not necessary for students participating in the National Student Exchange.

Verification of Enrollment

By the third week of each term, the NSE host institution coordinator verifies, using NSE's on-line student database, the enrollment for each student who has been placed at the institution. The home institution coordinator, using enrollment information from NSE's on-line verification student database, provides enrollment information to the home institution's financial aid office. The host institution NSE coordinator is responsible for monitoring enrollment throughout the term and advising the home institution NSE coordinator if the student's enrollment has dropped below full-time. The institution that disbursed federal financial aid will be responsible for determining and if necessary paying refunds or repayments resulting from the student's withdrawal from classes. A student whose home institution is a U.S. institution must comply with enrollment reporting requirements to the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS).

NSE Membership Roster

The National Student Exchange membership roster is posted at NSE's web site. To ensure that financial aid offices have an up-to-date roster of participating institutions, NSE provides an annual roster to the institution's financial aid officer identified by the NSE coordinator for the institution. NSE identifies, on its membership roster for financial aid purposes, those institutions that are Plan A exceptions.

NSE Membership Agreement

The *NSE Membership Agreement* entitles the contracting institution to membership in, and services provided by, the National Student Exchange in support of the exchange of students by and between its member colleges and universities. In signing the *Agreement*, the institution agrees to be bound by the policies and procedures detailed in the *NSE Handbook* and summarized in the *NSE Terms of Participation*. The *Agreement* serves an additional purpose since the form constitutes a consortium agreement by and between National Student Exchange members as it relates to the award and disbursement of Title IV Student Assistance.

- **Effective Date:** The *NSE Membership Agreement* is effective upon the signatures of the contracting institution and the president of the National Student Exchange.
- **Duration:** The *NSE Membership Agreement* remains in force as long as it is not expressly terminated in writing by either party.
- **Modification:** Any digression from NSE policy and procedure must be detailed in writing, appended to the *NSE Membership Agreement,* and be approved by the National Student Exchange.
- **Termination:** The *NSE Membership Agreement* may be terminated by written notification from either party and in compliance with provisions detailed below.

Termination of Membership

Whether membership is terminated by the National Student Exchange or by the contracting institution, the institution must fulfill its obligation to both outgoing and incoming exchange students, in accordance with this *NSE Terms of Participation*. That includes students whose exchanges have already begun prior to the notice of termination as well as students whose exchanges had been negotiated, but not yet begun, prior to the notice of termination.

By the National Student Exchange

Any contracting institution failing to administer its exchange program in accordance with these *NSE Terms of Participation* and the detailed description of NSE policies and procedures as outlined in the *NSE Handbook*, or as amended by written agreement with NSE, will not be permitted to renew its NSE membership. Any contracting institution failing to pay membership and/or student fees when due may have its membership terminated. The institution is obligated for payment of student application fees and the annual membership fee for the year the institution concludes its exchange obligations and phases out its NSE program activities.

By the Contracting Institution

The contracting institution may terminate its membership by notifying the NSE Central Office, by January 1, of its intention not to send or receive students for the subsequent academic year. The contracting institution is obligated for payment of annual membership and student application fees while it concludes its last year of NSE participation.

An institution that notifies the NSE Central Office, after student placements have been made at the annual conference in March that it intends to phase out its NSE participation during the subsequent academic year is obligated for payment of student application and annual membership fees for the year the institution concludes its exchange obligations and phases out its NSE program activities.

Resolution of Disputes

The National Student Exchange is based on the common trust and good faith of all of its member colleges and universities. The contracting institutions agrees, when it signs the *NSE Membership Agreement*, to abide by all the policies and procedures of the National Student Exchange as summarized in these *NSE Terms of Participation* and detailed in the *NSE Handbook.* In case of disputes, all parties shall seek an amicable resolution. Where that is not possible, any arbitration or litigation shall be resolved by, and enforceable in, the courts of the home of the NSE Central Office and/or its fiscal agent.

Disclaimer

The National Student Exchange links member colleges and universities in order for them to provide their students with opportunities for exchange to institutions of higher learning in other states, U.S. territories and/or Canadian provinces. NSE does not make any warrantee of any kind, expressed or implied, regarding NSE program participation, including the perceived quality of the experiences or services rendered. NSE is not liable to the home institutions, host institutions, or exchange participants for benefits not provided by any of the parties involved. The National Student Exchange assumes no responsibility and disclaims any liability for any injury, loss, damage, or expense (personal, academic, financial, or other) suffered by students by reason of their participation in this program. NSE does not accept responsibility for any loss, damage or interruption of classes suffered by a student as a result of causes within the control of its member institutions or causes such as weather, pandemics, strikes, domestic or international terrorism, etc.