

# **The Global Alliance for Innovative Learning (GAIL)**

## **Memorandum of Understanding**

*“If we are to have peace on earth our loyalties must become ecumenical rather than sectional. Our loyalties must transcend our race, our class and our nation. And this means we must develop a world perspective.”*

Words on the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial in Washington DC

### **PURPOSE STATEMENT**

The Global Alliance for Innovative Learning (GAIL) is a progressive confederation of eight schools that are geographically dispersed and espouse and practise comparable educational principles and ideals. All members of GAIL are forward-thinking, independent, co-educational schools. Each school is committed to developing informed, globally active learning communities that encourage contemporary solutions to international issues through collaboration, inquiry and service-learning initiatives. The Global Alliance is committed to building genuine connections based on authentic engagement, meaningful relationships, co-operation and trust. Implicit in this is the belief that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

GAIL is an international framework that encourages student exchanges, staff research fellowships and the opportunity to collaborate through the undertaking of purposeful service-learning projects on a global scale. The creation of intellectual property through interaction will permit all members of the Global Alliance to enhance their own practice, while also providing a forum to inform and influence the practice of others. It is when we rub shoulders and engage authentically with those from other countries, cultures and backgrounds that we truly learn and discover the common humanity that transcends our differences.

This document outlines the common framework around which the Global Alliance for Innovative Learning has agreed to collaborate and partner.

### **1. PRINCIPLES**

At the core, GAIL member schools should espouse and practise similar principles and ideals of education. These have as their fundamental objective the full and individual development of every student into a whole person; this means the simultaneous realisation of the aspirations – academic, physical, cultural and spiritual – of every member of the community, both male and female. This objective will be reflected in the curriculum and practice of each school, which, through its comprehensive nature, will enable and ensure that such development takes place.

### **2. GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE**

GAIL member schools should be as comprehensive as possible in the composition of their student bodies and, in particular, they should aim to be international and welcome students of all nationalities, although circumstances may dictate that this is possible only on an exchange or short-term basis. Students should learn to appreciate and value cultures, religions and languages other than their own and learn to see themselves as genuinely international citizens.

We value the term “global” over the term “international”. The concept of the international school emerged in the early 1960s from a time in the post-World War II era when tensions between nations and the identity of the nation state defined world politics. Today, ideology, fundamentalism, environmental and resource challenges have replaced the old frameworks

with a completely new set of tensions. Our aim must be to prepare young people for tomorrow's world, not yesterday's. As Eric Hoffer put it: "In times of change, learners inherit the earth while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped for a world that no longer exists."

### **3. EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE**

It was Einstein who observed that the nature of the problems the world needs to solve cannot be solved at the level at which they were created. We need to see beyond the fragmented differences of colour, culture, caste and language.

The Global Alliance of Innovative Learning is intended to enable young people and staff, representing some degree of the world's diversity, to have experiences of living and working together in pursuit of a genuinely global perspective and the development of global-mindedness. They have the opportunity to learn from others but also to see their own culture for what it is – for it is only when we are among those who are different from us that we see ourselves (our own values, beliefs and assumptions) for what we are.

From the conversations and friendships that emerge, they have an opportunity to forge the "ecumenical loyalties" described by Dr Martin Luther King, namely to recognise a common humanity that transcends the differences from which world problems are often experienced today. This is the global understanding that can be one of our greatest gifts to our school communities and to the wider world around us.

Our shared approach to education is holistic, challenging, experiential and engaging. We intentionally offer opportunities for young people and staff alike to show initiative and to develop self-discipline. We embrace the outdoors as a significant resource for learning and personal development. Our educational philosophy acknowledges that opportunities to develop deeper understanding of leadership through service are crucial if our school communities are to be relevant and future-focused.

Above all, the Global Alliance for Innovative Learning is intended to enable all members of our school communities to recognise that, as Kurt Hahn put it, there is more in each of us than we think!

### **4. SERVICE**

In striving to achieve balance between self-improvement and self-sacrifice in the interests of others, GAIL member schools should develop in their students, qualities of skill and care. They should educate their students in the concept and practice of service to those in need in their local communities and in projects further afield. Much of this will be achieved internally through example and the experience of the spiritual dimension, which should exist in every school.

At the same time, all students during their school career should be involved in service to the wider community and those in need beyond the school. GAIL member schools should also demonstrate an active concern for the natural environment, acknowledging and understanding proven environmental problems and playing a part in tackling these.

### **5. CHALLENGE**

GAIL member schools are committed to train their students in the appreciation of physical health and moral fortitude through the challenge and adventure of outdoor pursuits. In this context, graded experiential-learning activities should be included and significant in the curriculum and the fostering of a spirit of adventure in all students an important aspiration.

## 6. RESPONSIBILITY & LEADERSHIP

Education in the value of – and active participation in – shared decision-making is essential in all GAIL member schools. Students, particularly appreciating the importance of self-discipline, should be trained and obliged, through partnership with adults in the school community, to take an active role in the school's operations. Through the development of leadership qualities and skills, a high level of responsibility will be devolved to them both individually and collectively. Freedom of thought and speech should be encouraged, with appropriate forums and channels of communication existing to satisfy their aspirations.

## 7. COMMITMENT, ACCOUNTABILITY & EXPECTATIONS

Schools cannot be nominal or institutional members of GAIL. All levels of member schools – governors, staff and students – should embrace the philosophy and values of the Global Alliance. Member schools must be prepared to submit themselves to periodic appraisal of commitment and self-review to ensure continued membership.

If, in the unfortunate event that a member institution is not engaged or wishes to withdraw from GAIL, it must give notice of a minimum of twelve months and will be required to meet its obligations to the Global Alliance until the completion of the notice period.

Furthermore, GAIL member schools should commit to assist other member schools in areas of demonstrated strength, at the request of the individual school. These, *inter alia*, include participation in meetings between principals and other key staff members (both regular and occasional), international service projects and student and teacher exchanges, and a commitment to establishing a video-conferencing infrastructure. Member schools are expected to be involved in the organisation of some of these activities, including the staging of conferences and sharing of expertise.

The bare minimum commitment to the Global Alliance will require:

- a) **An annual physical meeting of heads of school.** Leadership will be the most critical ingredient in the success or failure of this alliance. This requires an annual physical meeting of school heads, where frank and deep conversation can happen. The travel costs will be borne by member schools, and the meeting costs shared equally by member schools (even if the head is unable to attend).
- b) **The appointment of a “champion” in each of the member schools.** This champion will be responsible for ensuring that agreed timetables are adhered to, they will be a single point of contact on areas of collaboration, and they will be a tireless advocate for the principles and the framework of the Global Alliance. The champion will be encouraged and empowered to be in regular contact with other champions across the Global Alliance.
- c) **Commitment to a convention.** There will be a rotating, annual, five-day convention of students and staff, where the host school will be responsible for the programme, the accommodation, food and hospitality, so that the only cost to visiting schools will be flights. Every year the Global Alliance will endeavour to include in the convention a maximum of ten students and two staff from each school, making a total of ninety-six attendees across eight schools. The head of the hosting school will chair the Global Alliance for that year.
- d) **Commitment to student exchanges.** Every member of GAIL is encouraged to establish a MoU with other member schools for student exchanges. The emphasis will be on simultaneous exchange, but member schools can be part of a banking system by which hosting will build up credits that can then be used to send future students to the schools that previously sent students. There will be no fees involved, and the model that Woodstock and

Scotch have established is recommended to each of the members of the Global Alliance (see Appendix 2 and 3).

- e) **Commitment to Staff Research Fellowships.** All members of the Global Alliance will encourage staff to participate in the Staff Research Fellowships programme in which individual staff members can conduct action research at another school. There will be a maximum of two fellowships each year, both for the sending and the host school. The duration of these fellowships should be no longer than three weeks, will require the publication of the research for Global Alliance members to access, and will require the host school to appoint a mentor who will support and guide the research. The host school will provide accommodation, food and transport during the fellowship, and the sending school will cover the travel costs of the staff member. (See Appendix 3 for a recommended framework for Staff Research Fellowships.)
- f) **Marketing & communications.** Member schools will give permission for their school name and logos to be used in communications within member institutions and for promotion of the Global Alliance.
- g) **Alliance identification.** Member schools will allow identification of their membership in the Global Alliance on the school website and in publications.

**8. EXECUTED AS AN AGREEMENT BY THE PARTIES ON THE DATE SET OUT BELOW.**

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF** this Agreement has been executed by the following parties:

**1. Signed for and on behalf of [Scotch College Adelaide] [ABN 54 570 672 877]**

.....  
(Signature of Signatory) (College Seal)  
**John Newton, Principal**  
Scotch College Adelaide, Carruth Road, Torrens Park, SA 5062

**Date:** ..... **Location:**

in the presence of:

.....  
(Signature of witness) print name and title of witness

.....  
(Signature of witness) print name and title of witness

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**2. Signed for and on behalf of [Woodstock School] [Tehri Road, Mussoorie, UK 248 179, India]**

.....  
(Signature of Signatory) (School Seal)  
**Jonathan Long, Principal**  
Woodstock School, Tehri Road, Mussoorie, UK 248179, INDIA

**Date:** ..... **Location:**

in the presence of:

.....  
(Signature of witness) print name and title of witness

.....  
(Signature of witness) print name and title of witness

3. **Signed for and on behalf of [Prestige College] [Hammanskraal, South Africa]**

.....  
(Signature of Signatory) (College Seal)  
**Thana Pienaar, Principal**  
Prestige College, PO Box 1455, Hammanskraal, 0400, South Africa

**Date:** ..... **Location:**

in the presence of:

.....  
(Signature of witness) print name and title of witness

.....  
(Signature of witness) print name and title of witness

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4. **Signed for and on behalf of [Robert Gordon's College] [Registered Scottish Charity No SC000123]**

.....  
(Signature of Signatory) (College Seal)  
**Simon Mills, Head of College**  
Robert Gordon's College, Schoolhill, Aberdeen, Scotland AB10 1FE

**Date:** ..... **Location:**

in the presence of:

.....  
(Signature of witness) print name and title of witness

.....  
(Signature of witness) print name and title of witness

5. **Signed for and on behalf of [Kimball Union Academy] [7 Campus Center Drive Meriden, NH 03770, USA]**

.....  
(Signature of Signatory) (College Seal)  
**Michael J. Schafer, Head of School**  
Kimball Union Academy 7 Campus Center Drive, Meriden, NH 03770

**Date:** ..... **Location:**

in the presence of:

.....  
(Signature of witness) print name and title of witness

.....  
(Signature of witness) print name and title of witness

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6. **Signed for and on behalf of [Western International School of Shanghai] [555 Lian Min Road, Xijing, Town Shanghai, Qing Pu District PRC 21702, Peoples Republic of China]**

.....  
(Signature of Signatory) (College Seal)  
**Greg Brunton, Executive Director**  
Western International School of Shanghai, 555 Lian Min Road, Xijing, Town Shanghai, Qing Pu District PRC  
21702, Peoples Republic of China

**Date:** ..... **Location:**

in the presence of:

.....  
(Signature of witness) print name and title of witness

.....  
(Signature of witness) print name and title of witness

7. **Signed for and on behalf of [Kristin School] [360 Albany Highway, Albany, Auckland, New Zealand]**

.....  
(Signature of Signatory)

(College Seal)

**Tim Oughton, Executive Principal**

Kristin School, 360 Albany Highway, Albany, Auckland, New Zealand

**Date:** ..... **Location:**

in the presence of:

.....  
(Signature of witness)

print name and title of witness

.....  
(Signature of witness)

print name and title of witness

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8. **Signed for and on behalf of**

.....  
(Signature of Signatory)

(College Seal)

**Date:** ..... **Location:**

in the presence of:

.....  
(Signature of witness)

print name and title of witness

.....  
(Signature of witness)

print name and title of witness



## APPENDIX 1: The Global Alliance for Innovation in Learning: Members

Prestige College	Thana Pienaar, Principal	<a href="http://www.prestigecol.co.za/">http://www.prestigecol.co.za/</a>	Hammanskraal, South Africa (near Pretoria)	
Robert Gordon's College	Simon Mills, Head of College	<a href="http://www.rgc.aberdeen.sch.uk/">http://www.rgc.aberdeen.sch.uk/</a>	Aberdeen, Scotland, UK	
Scotch College Adelaide	John Newton, Principal	<a href="http://www.scotch.sa.edu.au">www.scotch.sa.edu.au</a>	Adelaide, South Australia, Australia	
Woodstock School	Jonathan Long, Principal	<a href="http://www.woodstockschool.in">www.woodstockschool.in</a>	Mussoorie, Uttarkhand, India	
Kimball Union Academy	Michael J. Schafer, Head of School	<a href="http://www.kua.org">www.kua.org</a>	Meriden, New Hampshire, USA	
Western International School of Shanghai	Greg Brunton, Executive Director	<a href="http://www.wiss.cn">www.wiss.cn</a>	Shanghai, China	
Kristin School	Tim Oughton, Principal	<a href="http://www.kristin.school.nz/">www.kristin.school.nz/</a>	Auckland, New Zealand	

## Appendix 2: Student exchanges

Given the fact that there are different academic calendars across the member schools and different abilities to accommodate students in boarding or homestays, the recommendation for member schools is that they leverage their champions to establish MoUs for student exchanges directly with other individual member schools.

Scotch and Woodstock have already established a very robust MoU agreement that we would suggest every school review, consider and adapt to their situation. However, below are certain key principles that we hope will undergird each of the individual MoUs:

- The host school covers the costs of boarding, accommodation, educational material and social activities for exchange students.
- Where there are uniforms required, the host school will provide exchange students with uniforms for the duration of their exchange (not including shoes and underwear). These may be second-hand uniforms, and need to be returned at the end of the exchange.
- Exchange students and their families are responsible for all the travel, visa and medical insurance costs. In addition, if ICT is an important part of the host programme, exchange students may be asked to bring a laptop that meets the minimum requirements of the host school.
- Because there are significant costs attached to hosting a student, no more than two students per year from one member school can go on exchange to another member school (i.e. no more than two students from Scotch may go to Woodstock in one year, but Woodstock may host up to two students from other schools at the same time as hosting Scotch students).
- Preference for exchanges is given to students in Year 9 and 10 (age 15-16) in order to minimise the impact of the exchange on college / university preparation. Exceptions must be approved by the principals of both the sending school and the host school.
- If there isn't a reciprocal exchange at the same time, the sending school may "bank" an exchange with its partner school and may defer the use of it until a time that is mutually beneficial.
- Exchange students are required to make an assembly-level presentation about their home school at the host school, and vice versa.
- In the unlikely event that an exchange student contravenes the expectations of the host school, they may be sent home before the end of the exchange, at the expense of the parents. This extreme step would be taken only after the principals of the host school and the home school concur.

Other, unique, individual situations, requirements and circumstances may be addressed in the specific MoUs established between host schools.

## **Appendix 3: Sample student exchange MoU between Scotch & Woodstock**

## **Appendix 4: Staff Research Fellowships**

The main objective of the Staff Research Fellowships programme is to offer staff from GAIL members the opportunity to practise action research in a different but like-minded environment. Not only do we believe this will be a promising avenue for professional development, but the results of the action research will build intellectual property from which all member schools can benefit.

While this initiative will be evolutionary in nature, we want to propose a number of guiding principles for all GAIL members to agree on. Issues outside these should be addressed on a case-by-case basis by the champions and heads of the sending school and the host school.

Guiding principles for Staff Research Fellowships:

- The duration of the fellowship should be no longer than three weeks, including travel.
- The host school provides accommodation, food and, where required, transport. Ideally the accommodation should be with an existing staff member of the host school.
- The sending school continues to pay the staff member's salary, and also covers travel and visa costs. Partners or family members may accompany the staff research fellow only if the host school is willing and able to provide board and lodging for them, and they are required to pay their own travel expenses. All personal expenses are borne by the staff research fellow.
- The sending school is responsible for covering the classes or workload of the absent staff member.
- The staff research fellow is required to publish their research and make it available to the population of all Global Alliance members within two months of the end of the fellowship.
- The host institution is required to provide a senior staff member or subject matter expert to support and guide the research of the visiting research fellow and approve the research before publication.
- Fellowship applications are processed through a resident research selection committee. Once an application has been approved, it is forwarded to the host school for approval. The final step is approval by the heads of both the sending and the host school. The whole process is facilitated by the resident Global Alliance champion. This means that the application must be received by the resident research committee at least twelve months before the proposed date of commencement of the fellowship, and the two principals need to sign off on the fellowship at least six months before the commencement of the fellowship.
- While there is very clear benefit to teaching faculties, research fellowships are not restricted to teaching staff.
- While it is hoped that all members of the Global Alliance will take advantage of the opportunities that Staff Research Fellowships offer, it is not an exchange programme. However, the hosting capacity of each of the member schools is limited, so unless there is genuine reciprocity, the fellowship programme will not achieve its full potential.
- Global Alliance champions will collaborate to refine this process in order to make it smoother and less onerous, including working out ways in which to identify potential research opportunities to share among colleagues at member institutions.