

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)
Between
Dakota State University, South Dakota, United States of America
And
Seoul Media Institute of Technology, Republic of Korea

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishes the terms and understanding between Dakota State University (DSU) and the Seoul Media Institute of Technology (SMIT) to create pathways for SMIT students to pursue Master of Science (M.S.) degrees in Artificial Intelligence, Computer Science, Cyber Defense, and Cyber Operations as well as a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Cyber Defense, at DSU.

BACKGROUND

WHEREAS, Dakota State University (DSU), founded in 1881, is dedicated to preparing cyber-savvy graduates through a mission that emphasizes artificial intelligence, computer science, cybersecurity, and advanced academic programs, including master and doctoral degrees, and has established formal Educational Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with the National Security Agency and U.S. Army Cyber Command, and participates in the U.S. Cyber Command Academic Engagement Network;

WHEREAS, the Seoul Media Institute of Technology (SMIT) is a leader in practical cyber education and research, hosting the prestigious Best of the Best (BOB) program, which has been instrumental in training elite white-hat hackers and producing DEFCON champions;

WHEREAS, the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the United States have strengthened their alliance for more than seventy years through treaties and frameworks, most recently the 2023 U.S.–ROK Cybersecurity Cooperation Framework, underscoring the shared commitment to defending physical and digital domains;

WHEREAS, DSU and SMIT share a commitment to advancing cybersecurity expertise and recognize the potential for mutual collaboration in fostering academic growth, advanced research, and practical excellence;

INTENT

The intent of this MOU is to establish structured pathways for SMIT students to pursue DSU's M.S. programs in Artificial Intelligence, Computer Science, Cyber Defense, and Cyber Operations, as well as the Ph.D. in Cyber Defense. This collaboration aims to:

- Enhance artificial intelligence, computer science, and cybersecurity education through joint initiatives aligned with the U.S.–ROK alliance;

- Combine DSU’s academic expertise with SMIT’s practical mentorship resources, including the BOB program;
- Build a reliable pipeline of technically proficient professionals with advanced research and applied skills in artificial intelligence and cybersecurity;
- Strengthen interoperability between U.S. and ROK cybersecurity professionals.

Importantly, these students do not displace South Dakotan or U.S. students. Instead, DSU has designed this program to expand capacity by leveraging SMIT’s faculty expertise, ensuring that South Korean students participate without reducing opportunities for domestic students.

SCOPE OF THE COLLABORATION

1. Master Program Pathways

- a. SMIT students are eligible to apply for admission to DSU’s:
 - M.S. in Artificial Intelligence (MSAI) (suggest the cybersecurity specialization)
 - M.S. in Cyber Defense (MSCD) (suggest the technical specialization)
 - M.S. in Computer Science (MSCS) (suggest the cyber operations specialization)
 - M.S. in Cyber Operations (MSCO)
- b. Admission will follow DSU’s standard graduate admissions requirements.
- c. SMIT students may transfer up to three (3) pre-approved SMIT graduate-level courses for credit toward the DSU M.S. plans of study. These courses will be delivered fully by SMIT faculty at SMIT and accepted by DSU after confirming academic equivalency and rigor.
- d. Remaining coursework will be completed through DSU’s online platforms.

2. Doctoral Program Pathways

- a. SMIT will nominate top students for admission into DSU’s Ph.D. in Cyber Defense program.
- b. Admission will follow DSU’s standard graduate admissions requirements.
- c. Students will complete DSU’s 72-credit Ph.D. in Cyber Defense, consisting of knowledge courses (if required), a 12-credit research core, technical specialization, and nine credits of dissertation preparation.
- d. SMIT students may transfer up to three (3) pre-approved SMIT graduate-level courses for credit toward the DSU Ph.D. plan of study. These courses will be delivered fully by SMIT faculty at SMIT and accepted by DSU under agreements that confirm academic equivalency and rigor.
- e. Remaining coursework will be completed through DSU’s online platforms.

Residencies

- f. Like every other Ph.D. student studying cyber defense, SMIT students will attend three short residencies at DSU's Madison, South Dakota campus for CSC 890 seminars, proposal defenses, and dissertation defenses.

Ph.D. Research and Dissertation Oversight

- g. SMIT faculty will serve as dissertation chairs, and students will enroll in SMIT for the equivalency of 18 dissertation credits of CSC898D.
- h. Each dissertation committee will be completed in English and include at least one Beacom College faculty member with appropriate disciplinary, methodological, and/or procedural expertise. All SMIT faculty serving as dissertation chairs or on dissertation committees will be vetted and approved by the DSU Graduate Office to ensure they meet the institutional standards for doctoral-level mentorship to include research compliance training.
- i. The 18 dissertation credits will be transferred by transcript, enabling SMIT students to complete this final requirement for the Ph.D. degree.
- j. The dissertation proposal defense and final dissertation defense will normally occur during residency; however, by exception and with approval from the DSU Department Chair of Cyber Defense, these may be conducted via an online platform.
- k. Research Integrity and Human Subjects Compliance: All SMIT students will be trained in U.S. standards for Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) through DSU processes. Dissertation candidates conducting research in the ROK will be required to comply with both DSU's Human Subjects Policy (aligned with the Office for Human Research Protections - OHRP/Common Rule) and applicable ROK standards. Any research that involves data collected in, from, or pertaining to the United States must also receive approval from DSU's Institutional Review Board (IRB). In cases where DSU and ROK policies diverge, the stricter requirements will apply. SMIT faculty serving as dissertation chairs must complete DSU's research compliance training before assuming those roles.

3. Student Exchange

- a. SMIT students will also have the opportunity, though not the obligation, to participate with DSU students in academic conferences and cyber competitions.

COMMITMENTS BY BOTH INSTITUTIONS

- 1. High-Quality Standards:** Both institutions will adhere to rigorous academic and practical standards in curriculum design and delivery.
- 2. Resource Sharing:** SMIT will provide mentorship and practical research facilities, while DSU will ensure access to doctoral-level coursework and research supervision.

- 3. Publications and Intellectual Property (IP):** Co-authored publications will acknowledge both institutions. IP generated from joint research will be shared based on mutual agreement and in accordance with South Dakota Board of Regents (SDBOR) Policy 4.9.1 on IP. SDBOR-owned IP is any IP that is or may be owned by the SDBOR.
- 4. Funding and Expenses:** Students will bear tuition and associated costs unless funded through scholarships or external resources. Institutions may collaborate to secure funding opportunities.
- 5. Branding and Visibility:** All branded materials including logos, joint announcements, and public communications must be reviewed and approved by both DSU and SMIT. This may include establishing a jointly branded research center presence on the SMIT campus to symbolize collaboration and promote shared visibility.

AGREEMENT

This MOU is effective upon signature by both parties and will remain in effect for five (5) years, with the option for renewal upon mutual agreement.

AMENDMENTS

Any amendments to this MOU must be made in writing and agreed upon by both parties.

NON-BINDING

This MOU is a statement of intent and does not constitute a legally binding agreement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned being duly authorized by the respective agencies has signed this MOU.

Done on the 09/14/2025, 202X.

Signed on behalf of:

Signed by:



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Dakota State University

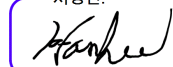
José-Marie Griffiths, Ph.D.

President, Dakota State University

Madison, SD, USA

Signed on behalf of:

Signed by:



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Seoul Media Institute of Technology

Ph.D. Hee Han

President, SMIT, Korea University

Seoul, Republic of Korea