



UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER

Academic Visitor Policy

Document Control

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Approved by	Research and Enterprise Committee, Senate
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Policy development steps

<u>Action</u>	<u>Description of steps taken</u>
Legal implications of this policy area	This policy was created by a working group of interested parties and approved by Senate in October 2025. This policy ensures that the University of Leicester is compliant with relevant Trusted Research and Freedom of Speech Legislation.
Consultation for this policy	Amendments to this version of the policy implement changes that have been reviewed by and received input from: • Research and Enterprise Committee • Executive Board

Version History

Version 1 – October 2025	First version of the policy
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Related procedures/guidance:

[Research Code of Conduct](#)

Academic Visitor Policy

University of Leicester

The University welcomes academic visitors from across the globe, as they significantly enrich our research environment and foster international collaboration. This policy is designed to balance this objective with the need to ensure: alignment with Trusted Research principles; transparency and consistency in decision making; and adequate coverage of direct and indirect costs incurred during the visit.

We expect our visiting academics to participate in the academic life of their host School as much as possible. This might include, engaging in discussions or joint projects with staff members, sharing their research, attending seminar programmes, and supporting PGRs. The research interests of the visiting academics should align with School and College research strategy. Priority will be given to visitors who have existing research links with the University of Leicester, will contribute to current or future income-generating research activities (including REF outputs), and/or are visiting from a strategic partner institution.

The University will not admit visitors on the basis of funding arrangements or other criteria that have the effect of restricting their or others' free speech or academic freedom within the law in accordance with the University's Freedom of Speech Code of Practice.

Policy

1. Scope

- 1.1. This policy applies to academic visitors who wish to visit the University beyond a few days. Academic visitors are academics who are employees of other institutions who can evidence a partnership with the University of Leicester and a mutual benefit both to them personally and the University of Leicester from the visit.
- 1.2. Academic visitors must be employed for the duration of their visit and be returning to this employment after the visit. They must provide evidence that they have the support of their employer to undertake the visit.
- 1.3. The University provides no remuneration or financial support for an academic visitor.
- 1.4. Academic visitors would not be registered as students (including PGR), at the University of Leicester or any other institution¹.
- 1.5. This policy is not applicable to visitors participating in collaborative research where the research is externally funded; attendance at workshops, events or conferences also falls outside the policy.
- 1.6. This policy is not applicable to academic visitors who may visit the University for a short period of time (up to one week in duration). This may include, for example a one off event such as conference attendance.

2. Duration of Visit

- 2.1. The length of visits varies from a few days up to six months in duration. In exceptional circumstances it may be possible for an academic visitor to stay for one year; this will have

¹ The visiting postgraduate researcher process is set out here: <https://le.ac.uk/study/research-degrees/visiting>.

implications for visa eligibility and the cost of the visit. Academic visitors who visit for a few days are outwith of this Policy.

3. Fees

- 3.1. All Academic Visitors are required to pay a fee. The fee charged reflects the nature of the research and the resources consumed. Fees are charged per annum, or pro-rata for shorter visits. All fees are subject to annual review by the Research and Enterprise Committee.
- 3.2. The University does not provide funding assistance for academic visitors.

4. Visa and Immigration Advice

- 4.1. Visitors are responsible for ensuring that any Home Office immigration/visa requirements are satisfied prior to entry to the UK, including ATAS clearance.
- 4.2. We would normally expect visiting scholars from outside the UK to enter on a visitor visa. Academic Visitors entering on a visitor visa are not allowed to work or study and must leave the country at the end of the 6-month period. They are also not entitled to free medical treatment on the National Health Service.
- 4.3. It is not possible to switch from a visitor visa to any other category.
- 4.4. Advice and guidance is available from the British Embassy or Consular Office (for addresses go to www.fco.gov.uk), UKOSA (www.ukcosa.org.uk), or the British Council (www.britishcouncil.org.uk).

5. Academic Guidance and Supervision

- 5.1. Every visitor has an academic host within the School who is their first point of contact, from initial enquiries. The academic host remains responsible for the visitor for the duration of the visit.
- 5.2. As a minimum the academic host should:
 - a) Complete the Academic Visitor Induction with the visitor;
 - b) Communicate with the academic visitor in advance of their arrival;
 - c) Play a key role in inducting the visitor into the School, including providing introductions to relevant staff and students in the School and informing the visitor of activities in which they might wish to participate;
 - d) Regular engagement with the academic visitor;
 - e) Meet with the academic visitor to ensure that all processes relating to the end of the visit are completed which include closing the IT account (if relevant) and collecting the identity passes. In the meeting agree potential ongoing collaboration opportunities with the academic visitor.
- 5.3. Failure to comply with the process and policy for Academic Visitors may place the University at risk and may result in disciplinary action.

6. Facilities and Support

- 6.1. Library Access: all visitors will be able to use open access areas of the Library.
- 6.2. Access cards: visitors will be issued with a University access card with access appropriate to the requirements of their visit.

- 6.3. IT network and Email Access: visitors would not ordinarily have access to the University's IT network or be provided with a University of Leicester e-mail address for the duration of their visit.
- 6.4. Access cards: visitors will be issued with a University access card with access appropriate to the requirements of their visit.
- 6.5. Space and Equipment: the University does not provide designated study or office space or IT equipment.
- 6.6. Accommodation and living expenses: the University does not organise accommodation for visitors. Visitors are required to organise their own accommodation.
- 6.7. Letters of Support: the University does not expect to provide letters of participation beyond the invitation letter to visitors.

7 Process

- 7.1 Before applying as a visiting scholar, the applicant must have identified and corresponded with an academic from within the School they wish to visit, who must agree to act as the academic host.
- 7.2 The academic host must ensure that the applicant has a satisfactory level of English language to undertake research and participate in School activities. If in doubt we recommend a telephone interview is arranged.
- 7.3 Once the host has provisionally agreed to accept the visitor, the prospective visitor must complete the 'Request for Invitation as an Academic Visitor' form and provide all additional material. This should include:
 - a) An up-to-date CV
 - b) Two academic references, including one from their current manager
 - c) A letter signed by their current Head of School on institution headed paper confirming:
 - that they are an academic member of staff of their home institution;
 - that they will remain employed by them for the duration of their visit;
 - that the visit has the full support of their Head of School;
 - that they will continue to receive their salary for the duration of their visit, or other evidence of funds such as an external grant;
 - that their institution has agreed to pay the cost of their visit (if relevant) and supports the visit objectives (in writing).
- 7.4 The application must be received at least six months before the visit is scheduled to commence.
- 7.5 The academic host will forward the form to the School for approval. The School will make an assessment on whether a Trusted Research Review is needed, at which point it would be passed to the relevant team in the Research and Enterprise Division for their review. This completed review would be added to the pack of documents for consideration.
- 7.6 The approved pack will be sent to the relevant College committee for final approval, which must include the Head of College, Director of Operations and the College Dean of Research and Enterprise. If the application is successful, the devolved HR Business Partnering team will then issue a letter of invitation and the Academic Visitor Agreement, copied to the School.

The School will also issue an invoice for the academic visitor fee, which is required to be paid before the start of the visit.

- 7.7 When the academic visitor arrives, they should be met by their academic host, who will be responsible for completion of the Academic Visitor Induction and remain responsible for the academic visitor for the duration of their visit.
- 7.8 If the academic visitor leaves prior to the scheduled end date of the visit the host is required to notify the College HR Business Partnering team so access to the University and facilities can be stopped.

Fee setting for Academic Visitors

All Academic Visitors are required to pay a fee. The fee reflects the nature of the research and the resources consumed, as outlined below. Fees are subject to annual review.

1.1 Administrative Fee

A one-off, non-refundable administrative fee is required from all visitors to process their application and arrange their stay:

- Fee: £150 (plus VAT)
- Purpose: Covers visa support letters (where appropriate), administrative processing, induction, and IT account setup.

1.2 Bench Fees by Specialism

These fees cover the use of School and University facilities and resources. Pro-rata fees apply to shorter visits.

Standard Fee

Eligibility: visits which involve no consumables or direct costs to the University (e.g. Social Sciences, Arts & Humanities).

- Annual Fee: £1,500 (plus VAT)
- Purpose: Covers utility costs, IT access, library privileges, access to School seminars, and general administrative support.

Enhanced Fee

Eligibility: Visits which incur direct costs to the University for consumables, or require access to University funded facilities such as labs, specialist computing facilities etc. Visits to STEM based subjects with lab access will typically fall within this category.

- Annual Fee: £2,500+ (plus VAT)
- Purpose: This fee provides access to the same facilities as the Standard fee but covers the costs of consumables, specialist equipment, lab space, and other direct research support. The final fee to be determined by the Head of School and the Academic Sponsor based on the proposed research costs incurred to the university. On the principle that the visit will be at least cost neutral.

1.3 Fee Waivers and Reductions

The University recognises that exceptional circumstances may prevent a visitor from paying the full fee. In line with our commitment to international research collaboration and academic refuge, fee waivers or reductions may be granted by the Head of School. However, the directly incurred costs of the visit will need to be met through the School's existing budget.

A full or partial waiver of the bench fee would normally only be considered for visitors who meet one of the following criteria, with supporting documentation:

1. Refugee or Displaced Person Status: The applicant has been forcibly displaced or is a refugee from a country experiencing significant conflict or crisis. Additional support may be required for the academic visitor, in these circumstances.

2. Low-Income Country Status: The applicant is a national of and resident in a low-income country, as defined by a recognised international body (e.g., the World Bank).

3. Exceptional Circumstances: A strong case can be made by the Academic Sponsor detailing special hardship or exceptional academic merit where a fee would be a significant barrier to the visit.

To apply for a fee waiver, the Academic Sponsor must submit a formal request to the Head of School with the following:

- A detailed letter of justification outlining the case for the waiver based on the criteria above.
- Supporting documentation (e.g., official refugee status papers, evidence of hardship, or details of a reciprocal agreement).
- A clear statement of the academic benefit to the University.

Decisions on waivers will be made by the Head of School, with final approval by the Dean of Research and Enterprise for the relevant College.

1.4 General Terms and Conditions

Funding: Visitors are responsible for securing their own funding for all living and travel expenses. The University will not provide any salary or remuneration.

This framework is a guiding document and all applications will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Final approval of any visit is at the discretion of the Head of School and the relevant Dean of Research and Enterprise.