

## ACADEMIC VISITORS : POLICY AND PROCEDURE

### 1 POLICY

- 1.1 The Department welcomes many eminent academics, researchers and students to work on collaborative projects or, more rarely, to pursue their own areas of research, and they, in turn, have enhanced the Department's international reputation.
- 1.2 Members of departmental established academic staff are eligible to sponsor visitors, although other individual senior researchers or academic-related staff may be given permission to host a visitor at the Head of Department's discretion.
- 1.3 Office space and facilities for visitors are increasingly under pressure. Therefore, invitations to academic visitors are issued only by the Head of Department, who will generally look favourably on applications if the visitor is wholly self-funded and the visit would be of clear benefit to the Department.
- 1.4 Hosts are asked to assist their visitors in obtaining accommodation well in advance of the visit, either with the host's College or directing their visitor to the University Accommodation Office or other commercial housing companies.
- 1.5 All Visitors, whether from the UK and the European Economic Area (EEA) or from countries outside these areas, for any length of time, are required to have the correct visa status for their visit to the University.
- 1.6 **Recognised Students:** A visitor who is a graduate research student registered with another university, wishing to come to the Department to undertake research for his/her degree for **a minimum of one and maximum of three terms**, is admitted as a Recognised Student. Please contact Mrs Marion Beckett ([graduate.studies@materials.ox.ac.uk](mailto:graduate.studies@materials.ox.ac.uk); tel: 83226) for further details. Recognised Student status is also given to an early career researcher admitted by the department to work with one of our academics or researchers. Recognised Students are not affiliated to an Oxford college or hall and will not receive an Oxford qualification or any formal accreditation for their studies here.

If a student does not meet the Recognised Student criteria, please check with the HoD's office for other possible routes of entry into the UK.

### 2 PROCEDURE

- 2.1 **Nationality and Academic Status:** Before an application is made, it is essential that the host determine the nationality and academic status of a proposed visitor. **ALL** visitors are required to hold the correct visa status.
  - (a) A visitor who is a visa-national must obtain a specific visa or entry clearance in his/her own country at his/her own cost prior to travel, and depending on the complexity, this procedure is commenced 16 weeks prior to the start of the visit. An invitation to take up visitor status is conditional upon the success of such an application.

(b) In some cases for visa nationals or non-visa nationals, a letter to the Entry Clearance Officer can be provided for some post-doctoral visitors who meet UKV&I criteria to enable them to obtain a visa for visits up to six months. Please contact the HoD's office to discuss current regulations.

- 2.2 **Nature and Length of Visit:** The precise length of the visit and nature of the work to be undertaken during the visit are also factors in determining the visa status of the visitor.
- 2.3 A formal application is made to the Head of Department using the Application to Host an Academic Visitor (Form V-7). A **hard copy** of this form should be fully completed and forwarded to the Head of Department, together with hard copies of the supporting documentation stipulated on the form.
- 2.4 If a Certificate of Sponsorship is required, hosts are required to obtain the information and documentation to complete the Draft Initial Application for a Certificate of Sponsorship (Form V-8) and submit it electronically to the HoD's office.
- 2.5 Each application requires prior approval **well in advance** of the visit. Early applications are much appreciated, especially before University vacation and annual leave times. The following **minimum** times are a guide for submission prior to the date of arrival:

<b>Status of Visitor</b>	<b>Working weeks</b>
UK and EEA nationals	4 weeks
Non-visa and visa nationals <b>not requiring</b> a Certificate of Sponsorship	8 weeks
Non-visa and visa nationals <b>requiring</b> a Certificate of Sponsorship	16 weeks

Approval will be considered subject to availability of space – wherever possible, the visitor is expected to be housed in the host's area.

- 2.6 In view of budgetary constraints and changes in research funding, a bench fee (see Form V-3) will be levied to cover the basic facilities provided to visitors. This will be waived only in exceptional circumstances, in which event a case must be made to and approved by the Head of Department in advance.
- 2.7 If approval is granted, a formal letter of invitation will be issued, with accompanying documentation, to the visitor. The visitor will be required to complete the documents and return them to the Head of Department's office for processing.
- 2.8 A host is requested to arrange a time, **in advance**, for their visitor to attend the Head of Department's office to receive the documentation relating to their visit. Hosts are also requested to advise Reception, **in advance**, of the visitor's arrival date.
- 2.9 Members of staff should remain attuned to visitors' requirements and opinions and report to the Head of Department if they are aware of changes that could be made to improve the circumstances of a visit.