

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH HANDBOOK

Chapter 16 - Visiting Postgraduate Research Students Policy and Procedures

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[Annex A: Summary of Student Visitor Schemes](#)

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

National and international research exchange and collaboration is essential to developing and maintaining a strong research culture and for building relationships with external partners. To this end we encourage visits from high quality PGR students who might wish to contribute to, and participate in, the work of the Faculties. In particular we will welcome visitors with strengths in our key research areas and from Higher Education Institutions with whom we are keen to develop (or maintain) strategic partnerships.

1.2 Purpose of this document

1.2.1 This document outlines the University of Exeter's policy ([section 2 below](#)) and procedures ([section 3 below](#)) for incoming Visiting Postgraduate Research Students (Visiting PGRs) to the University of Exeter.

1.2.2 The Visiting Postgraduate Research Student Policy and Procedure applies to all Faculties within the University. The document provides guidance and clarity to staff who are involved in agreeing and administering incoming Visiting PGRs.

1.2.3 Academic staff visitors are not covered by this policy and any academic visitors who are staff in their home institutions and are interested in spending time at the University on a visiting scholar basis **should** refer to our [honorary appointment policy](#) webpage.

1.2.4 The University [Visa Rules](#) webpage provides clear guidance as to the definition of an Academic Visitor or Sponsored Researcher for visa purposes.

1.2.5 This document **should** be read in conjunction with the University of Exeter [Admissions Policy](#).

1.2.6 This guide gives an overview of the schemes and contact information for **all** Visiting PGR Students at the University of Exeter.

2. Visiting Student Policy

2.1 Definition

2.1.1 A Visiting PGR is a student who is registered at another higher education institution (their “home institution”) either in the UK or abroad, who wishes to study and/or undertake research at the University of Exeter (“the University”, “host institution”) as part of a degree qualification at their home institution, normally for up to a maximum duration of a twelve-month continuous period. A visiting PGR on a sponsored programme **may** be registered for a maximum duration of a 24-month continuous period. To be considered as a Visiting Student under the OAS (Other Advanced Studies) scheme an applicant **must** be registered with their home institution for the duration of their planned visit. In instance where a visit is postponed for reasons beyond our control and the applicant's studies are completed in their home institution prior to their visit, the applicant will no longer be eligible to be considered under the OAS Visiting Student scheme and any offer **may** be rescinded. Whilst visiting research students are expected to be undertaking a Master's or PhD, Undergraduate students conducting research as part of their degree qualification will also considered under this policy.

2.1.2 Visiting PGRs do not graduate from the University of Exeter. Credit gained and/or research undertaken as part of a partnership programme at the University (where applicable) **may** transfer back to the home institution and **may** contribute towards the student's final qualification, depending on the regulations of the home institution.

2.1.3 Please note that under this definition, the University of Exeter does not consider students undertaking work experience or internships as Visiting PGRs. A Visiting Intern is a student, researcher, graduate, and/or member of the public who undertakes a work placement or internship at the University. Such a work placement or internship would be to enable the Visiting Intern to gain practical experience of a work-type role carrying out duties or tasks as an employee of the University would.

2.2 Categories

2.2.1 The University recognises **six different types** of Visiting Student, each with their own regulations:

- a. Erasmus+ Exchange Student.
- b. International Exchange Student.
- c. Study Abroad Student.
- d. European Independent Student.
- e. International Summer School Programme.
- f. Visiting Postgraduate Research Students (PGRs).

2.2.2 This policy and procedure covers Visiting PGRs only. If the visitor falls into one of the first five categories (see above) please contact the appropriate teams as indicated in the [TQA PGR Handbook, Chapter 16, Annex A Summary of Student Visitor Schemes](#).

2.3 General Guidance

Visiting PGRs **must** satisfy the University's [standard admissions requirements](#).

2.4 Academic Mentors

2.4.1 All Visiting PGRs require a member of the Faculty to act as an academic mentor who is responsible for them during the visit. This includes responsibility for ensuring the Visiting PGR understands the relevant regulations. The academic mentor does not qualify for time in the SWARM workload model for this role.

2.4.2 Academic colleagues providing support to Visiting PGRs **should** ensure that this does not impact negatively on the supervision provided to existing postgraduate research students at the University.

2.4.3 The first stage of arranging the visit, the academic mentor **should** obtain agreement for the visit from the relevant Department Director of Postgraduate Research or equivalent. Note that applications to the University need to be received at least three months before the intended start date of the visit to ensure timely visa applications can be made where appropriate.

2.4.4 As a minimum the academic mentor **should**:

- a. Contact the Admissions Office via email to obtain a link to the on-line application form.
- b. Ask the Visiting PGR to complete the on-line application form.
- c. For generic admissions enquiries, applicants are advised to contact the PGR Admissions team via email.
- d. Communicate with the applicant in advance of their arrival.
- e. Play a key role in inducting the Visiting PGR into the discipline, including providing introductions to relevant staff and students in the department and informing the visitor of activities in which they might wish to participate.
- f. Maintain contact with the Visiting PGR throughout the duration of the visit, and as a minimum on a monthly basis.

For visiting PGRs with a Student visa, academic mentors **must** email the Immigration Compliance team on a monthly basis to confirm continuous attendance. Further details of reporting actions will be provided by the Immigration Compliance team prior to the visitor's arrival. Failure to confirm attendance will be in breach of the University's regulations and **may** result in the visiting PGRs visa being revoked.

For visiting PGRs with a Temporary Work (Government Authorised Exchange) visa, an absence record **should** be completed annually, or when the visitor leaves. Information of the details required and spreadsheet for recording absences will be

provided to the academic mentor when the visitor arrives, from the HR immigration advisory team.

2.4.5 Visiting PGRs **must** abide by the University's rules, regulations and codes of practice, including the University's [Intellectual Property regulations](#) and the University's [Ethics Policy](#), and as detailed in the [University Calendar](#), and TQA Manual. Such terms and conditions **may** include but not be limited to assignment of any Intellectual Property generated by the Visiting PGR to the University where the University has obligations to a third party for that research project; or agreement to a confidentiality agreement where the Visiting PGR may be privy to confidential information during the course of their project. This may impact on assessment procedure at the home institution, and publication of the research the student/scholar undertakes at the University.

2.4.6 A Visiting PGR **must** agree fully the details of their project with the University prior to the University confirming acceptance of the Visiting PGR. This is to ensure that there are sufficient facilities, resources and expertise available to support the Visiting PGR. This process will also ensure the Visiting PGR is aware of any additional terms and conditions they may need to agree to in advance of coming to the University.

2.4.7 A visiting PGR cannot register during the following periods, and therefore **must** arrange to start their visit at alternative times:

- a. Last 2 weeks of July
- b. First 3 weeks of August
- c. Last 2 weeks of December

2.5 Intellectual Property

2.5.1 Student visitors to Exeter will potentially be privy to information (in written, verbal and electronic form) which is confidential to the University and its employees and/or third-party information which the University and its employees are under contractual obligations to maintain as confidential ("Confidential Information"). It is a condition of the student visitor status that the visitor agrees to keep all Confidential Information strictly confidential and not to disclose it to any third party without our written consent,

and that the visitor will indemnify the University in respect of any claims, damages, losses or costs incurred as a consequence of any unauthorised disclosure by the visitor of any Confidential Information. For further information about confidentiality please contact the [Legal Office](#).

2.5.2 In the event that the student visitor creates intellectual property with commercial potential either in collaboration with an Exeter employee or independently in the course of their research, please refer to the University's [Intellectual Property Policy](#) (once IT access is set up). If you have any queries please contact the [IP Manager](#) via email.

2.5.3 If a Visiting PGR conducts research independently at the University they will be bound by the [Code of Good Practice in the Conduct for Research](#) and **must** obtain ethical approval where appropriate. Please note visitors will not be covered by the University's professional indemnity insurance.

2.6 Accommodation and Living Expenses

2.6.1 The University does not organise accommodation for Visiting PGRs or contribute to living expenses, information on our [Accommodation webpages](#) may be helpful. Visitors are required to organise their own accommodation. As a rough guide, it is estimated that a single student living in Exeter or Cornwall will need approximately £1000 – £1,400 a month to meet basic living expenses such as accommodation costs, food, books, equipment and other necessities. Further information on the cost of living for International Visiting PGRs can be found on our [International Student Community & Support](#) pages.

2.7 Transcripts of Study/ Letters of Support

2.7.1 The University does not expect to provide transcripts of study or letters of support beyond the invitation letter to Visiting PGRs. In some circumstances letters confirming the dates of the visit and academic mentor will be provided on request.

2.8 Health and Safety

2.8.1 All student visitors are expected to adhere to the University Health and Safety policy whilst using University premises and familiarise themselves with the [University Health and Safety Policy](#).

2.9 Working Custom and Practice

2.9.1 All Visiting PGRs to the University are expected to adhere to the standard working customs and practices of the academic Faculty they are visiting; the appropriate Faculty handbook can be made available in advance of any visit.

2.10 English Language Requirements

2.10.1 Visiting PGRs whose first language is not English, are expected to have a sufficient level of English language skills (see [English Language Requirements](#)) to conduct research at the University and to participate in Faculty life. Those who require a Student visa (If visiting for more than 6 months) will be expected to show they have attained the level for standard University entry. Student visitors **may** be required to have a brief telephone discussion with the academic mentor prior to submitting an application.

3. Visiting Research Student Procedures

3.1 Recording Postgraduate Research Visitors

3.1.1 All Visiting PGRs **must** be recorded on the University's Student Record System through the Other Advanced Study (OAS) designation, to ensure the University meets its legal responsibilities for insurance, health and safety and immigration.

3.1.2 In order for the University to be fully compliant with Home Office regulations all Visiting PGRs, who require a Student or Standard Visitor visa to study in the UK, regardless of the duration of their visit, will need to present their original visa and original passport to the Immigration Compliance team on arrival, before they can be permitted to register on their programme. For Temporary Work (GAE) visa holders once an application has been approved, a member of the HR immigration team will be in contact to provide details of the next steps before they can be permitted to register on their programme.

3.1.3 All Visiting PGRs who attend the University will need to complete the University's enrolment process. Through subscribing and enrolling, Visiting PGRs will have access to a University email account and use of the University's online resources.

3.1.4 A Visiting PGR **must** not be recorded additionally as a visitor on any other University system.

3.2 Changes to Duration of Visit

3.2.1 All Visiting PGRs who wish to extend a visit of less than six months, to a period of up to twelve months, **should** discuss their request for extension with both their supervisor at the home institution and allocated academic mentor at the host institution.

3.2.2 Visiting PGRs will not normally be permitted to continue for more than twelve months without registering for a University of Exeter qualification, unless visiting on a sponsored programme, whereby the maximum permitted duration is 24 months.

3.3 Applicants requiring a Visa to Study in the United Kingdom

3.3.1 It is the responsibility of the Visiting PGRs to ensure that they have obtained the appropriate visa for the duration of their stay. Visiting PGRs **should** follow the instructions laid out on the [Visiting PGR Visa pages](#) to obtain their visa, and **must** start the process at least three months before their expected travel date. Where individual immigration advice is needed, the [International Student Community & Support team's](#) immigration advisors can help. The University cannot take responsibility for delays relating to visa applications or liaison with other University departments/staff.

3.3.2 Students who wish to attend for periods of six months or less can apply for a Standard Visitor visa. The benefits of this route are that the University has reduced monitoring and reporting duties. Students can apply for this visa on the basis of a letter issued by Student Immigration Services once an offer has been confirmed. This will be the preferred option for any Visiting PGR wishing to come to the University for six months or less.

3.3.3 Any Visiting PGR coming for a period of six months or more will need to apply for a Student visa or Temporary Work (Government Authorised Exchange) visa. For a Student visa the University is required to issue a CAS, and the Visiting PGR will need to demonstrate that they are registered on a degree level programme or higher in their home country and that the period spent at Exeter will count towards the award of their degree. The Visiting PGR will also need to satisfy the Student visa English language requirements. The University can issue a CAS for a period of research of less than six months, but the Standard Visitor visa route is recommended in this scenario for the reasons outlined above.

3.3.4 For a Temporary Work (Government Authorised Exchange) visa the University is required to issue a Certificate of Sponsorship (COS). The Visiting PGR will need to demonstrate they meet the Temporary Work (Government Authorised Exchange) eligibility requirements, which includes evidence of funding in the form of a scholarship or bursary from a third party (cannot be self-funded) which equates to £1199 per month (note this rate changes annually in April, contact the [HR Immigration Team](#) via email and they will be able to advise on the current rate). The University can issue a COS for a period of research up to 24 months.

3.3.5 For certain programmes it **may** also be necessary to apply to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) for clearance to study this programme in the UK. This applies regardless of the immigration route chosen by the student. Where required, ATAS clearance **must** be granted before a visa application can be made.

3.3.6 Whilst there is no formal English Language requirement for a Standard Visitor or Temporary Work (GAE) visa, the university expects any visitor to be able to engage widely within University life. Therefore, it is required that all PGR visitors applying via the Other Advanced Studies route **should** meet the [minimum UKVI regulations](#) (equivalent to CEFR level B2). This requirement enables visiting students to engage with the University research community, in addition to the local community in which they will be based. This policy is in line with the University Admissions policy demonstrating a fair

and transparent approach for all OAS applicants independent of their visa requirements.

3.4 Visiting PGRs with Specific Supervision Requirements

3.4.1 In instances where a Visiting PGR is undertaking their visit as part of a funded partnership scheme, which requires formal supervision and the University **may** be expected to report on outcomes of the visit, these visiting PGR students will be subject to the standard University tuition fees in accordance with their fee classification, dependant on the partnership agreement.

3.4.2 Visiting PGRs participating through any funded activity **must** present on arrival their training agreements or other relevant documentation, which **must** be authorised on completion of their visit.

3.5 Academic Fees and Facilities provided to Visiting PGRs

3.5.1 Visiting PGRs are subject to paying the University's fees in accordance with the University fee schedule as indicated. The term 'Academic Tuition fees' refers to the sessional fee inclusive of all charges for matriculation and enrolment.

3.5.2 Bench fees **may** be applied depending on the intended research to be undertaken. Visiting PGRs will be advised of any bench fees they will be expected to pay prior to receiving an offer.

3.5.3 Subject to formalised exchange agreements, Visiting PGRs who are accepted by means of reciprocal exchange agreement through a MoA and who are 'co-registered' are not required to pay the academic fee at the host institution for the duration of their programme as per the terms and conditions of their agreement.

3.5.4 All Visiting PGRs who are accepted for up-to and including a three calendar months continuous period will not be charged a fee.

3.5.5 Visiting PGRs who are not governed by any formal exchange or partnership agreement (MoA) who are admitted for more than three calendar months continuously will pay the fee according to the University's Visiting PGR fees as shown in the table below.

3.5.6 If the Faculty decides a Visiting PGR is not required to pay the Fee, the decision to waive the fee **must** be approved by the Faculty Director of PGR.

3.5.7 It is the responsibility of the Visiting PGR to ensure they have sufficient financial resources for their whole period of study.

3.5.8 Visiting PGRs are not eligible for any funding, grants, or scholarships provided by the University of Exeter for the duration of their visit.

3.6 Summary

3.6.1 **Tuition fee:** Refer to [the PGR fees webpage](#).

3.6.2 **Bench fee payable:** project dependant (refer to your offer letter)

3.6.3 Hot desk space, UniCard and IT Access will be provided for all visiting PGRs