



Postgraduate Research Code of Practice

APPENDIX 13

PGR Policy and Procedures for Visiting Research Students

1. Introduction

From time to time staff host individual Postgraduate Research (PGR) students from other degree-awarding institutions for a limited period of time. Such collaborative links bring benefits to the University of Liverpool (hereafter referred to as UoL), to the institutions at which the students are registered and to the students themselves.

Visiting Research Students (hereafter referred to as VRS) can benefit substantially, both academically and personally, from their time at UoL, e.g. they will be able to build relationships with other research groups and will benefit from experiencing a different research environment, providing different insights and perspectives within and between disciplines and helping to foster increased creativity in their research. Students also gain access to an increased range of resources, equipment, techniques and research sources/collections.

Admitting a VRS can offer a number of opportunities for UoL, showcasing its research capabilities and promoting the University in the UK and overseas, thus facilitating globalisation of UoL in accordance with the Strategic Plan. The student can also be an ambassador for UoL in their own institution. It may lead also to reciprocal arrangements for UoL students. The benefits to the host School/Institute are also tangible, and interaction with researchers currently working in a different educational environment can be rewarding and encourage further collaboration between individuals and institutions.

1.1 This Policy forms part of the University's [Postgraduate Research \(PGR\) Code of Practice](#)

In addition to the PGR Code of Practice (PGR CoP) and its Appendices, other UoL policies, procedures and documents which may be relevant to this Policy are as follows:

- PGR Handbook
- Student Complaints Procedure (see Section 10 for web link).

1.2 This Policy and the term VRS refers to Postgraduate Research programmes only.

1.3 The Policy does not confer any visa immigration advice for students requiring a visa to study in the UK. For further details regarding admission requirements see section 4 below.

1.4 The nature of the different opportunities for a VRS means that experiences will inevitably differ for each student attending UoL for a short period of time.

1.5 There are general administrative and support requirements when admitting a VRS to UoL. These responsibilities, including those of the student, are outlined in the following sections of this Policy. Responsibilities of the student include fee payment and the requirement to adhere to UoL's governance and appropriate regulations e.g. regarding Health and Safety and conduct requirements.

1.6 Any research related activity carried out at UoL must be undertaken in line with UoL policies, guidance and processes.

2. Scope of this Policy

This Policy does not cover:

2.1 Short periods of stay of less than four weeks e.g. to attend a conference or symposium.

2.2 Students on taught programmes of study at UoL.

- 2.3 Students or visitors attending the University for the purpose of work experience of any kind.
- 2.4 Students coming to UoL as part of formal exchange agreements or other relevant agreements with other institutions through the [International Recruitment and Admissions team](#).
- 2.5 Students coming to UoL as part of the agreement with XJTLU.
- 2.6 Students coming to UoL as part of Doctoral Training Entities/Partnerships.
- 2.7 Visitors in any other capacity, such as postdoctoral fellows, those with a 'Visitor' status in HR (neither being staff nor a student).
- 2.8 Research students who are registered solely as students of UoL but who are located away from the UoL campus for substantial period(s) of their registration and who are the subject of an off-site or split-site arrangement with another institution. Such students are covered by the Policy on Off-site and Split-site Research Degree Study (for a single University of Liverpool award) (Appendix 11 of the PGR CoP).
- 2.9 PGR students who primarily attend UoL for purposes other than supporting or enhancing their research degree studies.

This Policy does cover:

- 2.10 A VRS, as defined in Section 3 below, coming to UoL.
- 2.11 Research students who are registered solely as students of UoL and who are located away from the UoL campus staying as a VRS in another institution for short period(s) of their registration (see section 9).

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy the term '*Visiting Research Student*' is defined as follows:

- The student will be registered for a research degree at another recognised institution in the UK, EU or Overseas and their short-term attendance for a defined period of time at UoL will contribute to their studies. The student will remain registered at their home institution for the period of attendance at UoL.
- The student will be undertaking some aspect of research and/ or skills acquisition at UoL.
- There are two distinct categories of VRS, each with its own corresponding fee level:
 - Unsupervised VR students attend UoL to support skills development to assist their research degree studies. Unsupervised VR students have access to UoL's IT, library and online resources, a suitable workspace and specialist training and equipment offered at the discretion of the host School/ Institute to support skills acquisition.
 - Supervised VR students receive the same entitlements as unsupervised VR students, and, in addition, will receive dedicated academic supervision from UoL.
- Except where stated otherwise, the student will be permitted to attend UoL for a period of no less than 1 (one) calendar month and normally no more than 12 (twelve) months.

- A VRS who wishes to extend their stay beyond 12 (twelve) months on an exceptional basis should discuss their request with both their Supervisor at their home institution and allocated Supervisor or relevant School/ Institute contact at UoL, as appropriate. A VRS will not normally be permitted to visit for more than twelve months, except where there is an identified need, which occurred as a result of reasons beyond their control, to extend the visit. A formal exchange agreement will be required if it is the requirement of a sponsor, or the wish of the VRS, for attendance at UoL for longer than a total period of 15 (fifteen) months.
- The admitting School/Institute will determine the attendance requirements and will confirm these to the student when making an offer of a place. Due consideration should be given to the support requirements of the student e.g. supervision/ administrative oversight, pastoral care, monitoring and health and safety requirements, when making the offer of a place.
- Normally the student will attend UoL on a full-time basis i.e. they are required to be present at the University for the duration of their period of stay. Requests to attend part-time will be considered on an individual basis but International students should be aware that this may have implications for their visa application and status. Student visa holders are not permitted to attend UoL as an unsupervised VRS. If an International VRS is planning to study elsewhere in the UK during the period of their visit to UoL they must consult UoL's International Advice and Guidance Team (see web link in Section 10 of this Policy) on the constraints of their visa status.
- The student will receive no formal accreditation from UoL.
- If the student is enrolled as a supervised VRS, they will work under the guidance of a suitably qualified and approved UoL research Supervisor during their time at UoL, in accordance with the Policy on Research Student Supervision (Appendix 2 of the PGR CoP). See Section 7 below for further details.
- The student will not have a contract of employment at UoL, nor will they be permitted to carry out teaching or demonstrating duties.
- *Visiting Research Student* is a term specifically used by higher education institutions, and does not refer to any UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) visiting student visa categorisation.¹

4. Requirements for Admission

- 4.1 Enquiries from a prospective supervised VRS can be made informally to Supervisors or the School/Institute PGR Administration Team, and students should normally be encouraged to approach a potential Supervisor before they make a formal application to attend. Normally a research proposal and CV should be presented for the Supervisor to consider regarding the likely benefit to UoL and the student arising from the period of attendance. Should a Supervisor consider that the period of attendance will be beneficial for the prospective supervised VR student and the School/Institute involved, the applicant will then be required to complete UoL's online application form or contact the School/Institute PGR Administrator for further guidance, where appropriate.
- 4.2 Enquiries from a prospective unsupervised VR student should be made via the School/Institute PGR Administration Team.
- 4.3 A VRS who attends UoL will need to apply formally i.e. download and complete the University's [visiting research student application form](#) (and see Annexe 1).

¹[UK Visas and Immigration](#)

The VRS must be accepted at UoL before their visit commences.

4.4 The student must already be registered on a research degree at another recognised institution. The School/Institute will require further documentation from a VRS as part of the application process including, but not limited to:

- a) two academic references.
- b) proof of enrolment and attendance on a research degree programme i.e. a letter from their home institution confirming their registration and attendance at that institution. The letter must also indicate the host institution's consent/recommendation for the student to visit UoL and confirm that the period of study or skills acquisition is relevant to the student's current study.
- c) All students at UoL, both from the UK and overseas, are expected to have high proficiency in the English language. For full details of the external requirements for an International VRS attending UoL please see the Postgraduate Research Degrees Admissions Policy and Procedures (Appendix 1 of the PGR Code of Practice), the UKVI website and the Policy on UKVI Compliance (Student Route) (see the web links in Section 10).

4.5 Visa applications:

Under the terms of UoL's sponsorship licence for admission of International students, the following rules will apply for a VRS:

- a) It is the responsibility of the VRS and UoL to ensure that the VRS has obtained the appropriate visa for the duration of their stay. This will be verified by UoL on their arrival. For details of UoL's Policy on UKVI Compliance (Student Route) please see the web link in Section 10 below. A student should contact UoL's International Advice and Guidance Team before arriving in the UK for guidance on applying for entry clearance to come to UoL to study (see web link in Section 10 of this Policy).
- b) Student visa holders are not permitted to attend UoL as an unsupervised VRS.
- c) If an International visitor is already in the UK they must contact UoL's International Advice and Guidance Team for advice regarding their visa status before applying to visit UoL as a VRS.
- d) An International VRS who is attending UoL for less than six months and who is studying under the Visitor visa route may not extend their stay beyond the expiry date of their Visitor visa.

4.6 For certain programmes it may also be necessary for the VRS to apply to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) [Academic Technology Approval Scheme \(ATAS\)](#) for clearance to study this programme in the UK before an application for a Student visa can be made.² However, it is the applicant's responsibility to check if the ATAS scheme applies to them, as they will be unable to obtain a visa if they need an ATAS certificate and do not have one.

5 Procedures

The following procedures apply when handling requests for a VRS to attend UoL:

²<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academic-technology-approval-scheme>

Prior to the visit

Submission and approval of the application

- 5.1 Potential UoL Supervisors for supervised VR students should consult the Guidance for School/ Institute Staff (Annexe 3 of this Policy) regarding the planned research commitment and resources for the proposed visit. For unsupervised VR students, the resource commitment will be approved by the relevant School/ Institute contact.
- 5.2 The completed VRS application form and supporting documentation (as defined in Section 4.4) must be sent to the PGR Administration Team in the School/Institute.
- 5.3 Following the School/Institute's review of the application, final approval must be given by the SDPR/IDPR and must include consideration of any research support fees or 'bench fees' to be charged and associated access to specific specialist facilities.
- 5.4 Following approval of the application, the School/Institute must copy the application form and all supporting documentation to the Student Recruitment and Admissions Office. The Student Recruitment and Admissions Office will then allocate the proposed VRS with a student identification number and notify the School/Institute of this number.

Once the School/Institute has received the VR student identification number they will issue the VRS with a formal offer letter (templates at Annexe 2), which will detail the terms of registration, their Supervisor and/ or designated contact (unsupervised VR students will be allocated a School/ Institute contact only), the fee payment, any research support fee or 'bench fee' associated with the visit and the permitted access to associated itemised resources and the attendance dates of the visit. The 'Reply Slip' to be completed by the VRS (see Section 5.5 below) will be attached to the offer letter (template at Annexe 2c).

- 5.5 The VRS will be required to complete a 'Reply Slip' (Annexe 2c) and return it to the PGR Administration Team in the School/Institute, who will then enter the "Confirmed Offer" (CO) status on UoL's Student Record System to enable a registration form to be generated.
- 5.6 The VRS must make their own arrangements for accommodation for the period of their stay. It is strongly recommended that they do this prior to arrival in Liverpool.

Registration and induction on arrival at UoL

- 5.7 The VRS will register with UoL at their School/Institute at the start of their period of stay at UoL. The hosting Supervisor or School/ Institute contact must be recorded in their student record in the normal way. The Research Degree Administration Team (SAS) will register the VRS on the Student Record System.
- 5.8 Once registered on the Student Record System, the Research Degree Administration Team in SAS will issue the VRS with an ID card to enable them to have access to UoL facilities and to ensure UoL meets its legal responsibilities for insurance, health and safety, and immigration. An International VRS must bring their passport and visa to Student Administration with them when they wish to collect their ID card. SAS will be unable to issue their ID card without sight of their passport.
- 5.9 Once registered on UoL's Student Record System and issued with their student ID card, a VRS will have access to the following facilities during their stay:
 - IT facilities including email access and UoL's online resources.
 - Library Services.
 - Research skills training.

- Access to appropriate work-space.
- Access to appropriate specialist equipment as agreed prior to their attendance.
- Supervised VR students will also receive supervision in accordance with Section 7 below.

- 5.10 It is the responsibility of the UoL Supervisor or School/ Institute contact to ensure that a risk assessment of laboratory and/or field-based activities is carried out in accordance with UoL and School/Institute procedures, where appropriate (see Annexe 3).
- 5.11 On arrival, a VRS must receive the required health and safety training as appropriate. It is the responsibility of the School/Institute to ensure that a VRS has completed this training.
- 5.12 Induction will normally be part of the Supervisor or School/ Institute contact's responsibilities.

During the stay

- 5.13 An International VRS who requires a visa to study in the UK and who is considering requesting an extension to their visit should apply to the School/Institute. However, an International VRS who is attending UoL for less than six months and who is studying under the Visitor visa route should consult Section 4.5 above regarding restrictions on extending their stay. Where an extension is approved, it is the responsibility of the School/Institute to contact UoL's [International Advice and Guidance Team](#) at the earliest opportunity.
- 5.14 It is the responsibility of the hosting School/Institute to advise the Research Degree Administration Team (SAS) of any changes to the duration of stay of a VRS who requires a visa to study in the UK e.g. if the VRS has to return home earlier than expected.
- 5.15 The Supervisor or School/ Institute contact will provide any VRS who is funded by an external sponsor with a report on the student's achievements during the visit or provide a letter outlining support and project aims and deliverables. This requirement from the sponsor will be outlined in the terms and conditions of the funding.
- 5.16 Supervisors should facilitate a supervised VR student's attendance of relevant training as appropriate to their requirements.
- 5.17 Supervisors must ensure that the supervised VRS records their attendance according to the School/Institute's process for attendance monitoring. (See Annexe 3 for guidance). Unsupervised VRS attendance shall be monitored by the appropriate School/ Institute contact.
- 5.18 If, following an initial appropriate investigation, the School/Institute considers that a VRS might have committed academic misconduct during their visit UoL will not handle the matter under UoL's procedures but will notify the home institution so that the matter can be handled under the host institution's student conduct procedures.

Conclusion of Visit

- 5.18 On conclusion of their visit to UoL, a VRS will be provided with an official record as proof of their period of attendance at UoL (see Annexe 4 for a template), which will be made available to the VRS by the School/Institute and copied to the Research Degree Administration Team (SAS).

6 Fees

A VRS will be charged fees for their period of registration at UoL to cover costs incurred by UoL centrally and at the School/Institute as a result of their visit. Payment of the fees will be in accordance with the [Student Fees and Funding Office Payment Policy](#). A VRS will obtain no financial support from UoL.

- 6.1 The relevant fee will be provided in the offer letter.
- 6.2 Schools/Institutes are permitted to determine the research support fee (also known as 'bench fee') to be charged. The fee must be determined by the School/Institute prior to the arrival of the VRS and should be based on the actual costs incurred for services such as supervision or administrative oversight and consumables and it would be expected to reflect the length of the visit. The fee and the associated specific resources to which the VRS will have access should be defined in the offer letter.

7 Supervision

Sections 7.1 – 7.4 below apply to all supervised *and* unsupervised VR students:

- 7.1 The VRS may be new to the UK and certainly new to UoL and the School/Institute. Supervised and unsupervised VR students should be introduced to the School/Institute, its facilities and procedures, and to other students and relevant staff and encouraged to take as full a part as possible in the social and intellectual life of the School/Institute and UoL. For example, they should be encouraged to participate in local seminars and meetings as appropriate.
- 7.2 Any absences of more than ten working days should be reported directly to the School/Institute PGR administration team. For an International Supervised VRS, who is required to comply with UoL's Policy on UKVI Compliance (Student Route), the School/Institute will be required to maintain a record of the approved short period of absence (see web link in Section 10).
- 7.3 The VRS should be made familiar with their responsibility to avoid any form of research misconduct whilst they are at UoL.
- 7.4 All VR students must familiarise themselves with and abide by UoL's policies and procedures pertaining to Research Ethics.

Additionally, sections 7.5 – 7.11 below *also* apply to supervised VR students:

- 7.5 In accordance with the Policy on Research Student Supervision (Appendix 2 of the PGR CoP) during their time at UoL the VRS will work under the guidance of a Supervisor, who has been appointed in accordance with Section 3 of Appendix 2 of the PGR CoP. It is not a requirement to allocate both a Primary and Second Supervisor to a supervised VRS (as is the case for UoL-registered students); normally a supervised VRS will have one Supervisor allocated to oversee their work.
- 7.6 As the Supervisor will have a shorter period in which to build up a productive working relationship with the supervised VRS, it is particularly important to establish early a strict timetable of regular meetings with them. An initial supervisory meeting should be held with them as early as possible after their arrival to discuss how the plan for the research will be implemented and reviewed during their time at UoL.

- 7.7 Supervisors must ensure that due consideration has been given to the ethical dimensions of the research to be undertaken at UoL and that ethics approval is sought at the appropriate time, where required. Where approval for the research has already been obtained from the student's home institution then a copy of the application and formal approval must be submitted for consideration in accordance with the standard UoL ethics procedures (see [UoL's Research Ethics website](#) for further details).
- 7.8 Supervisors should determine, in consultation with the Dean of School/Institute, at the start of a student's visit to UoL, whether an assignment of Intellectual Property Rights/Copyright is necessary, in accordance with UoL's Intellectual Property Policy, and if so, ensure that an agreement on IP/Copyright has been established at the outset of the project.
- 7.9 Supervisors' responsibilities and the amount of time they will spend advising a supervised VRS will vary according to the discipline and the needs of the research project and of the individual researcher. In general however, a supervised VRS should not be accepted unless the Supervisor is able to devote appropriate time to them during their stay.
- 7.10 Supervisors should provide appropriate support to the student in the usual way and should provide prompt constructive criticism on submitted draft work as appropriate, and discuss with the supervised VRS the work accomplished and revise the objectives as the work proceeds.
- 7.11 If required, Supervisors should provide a report to a sponsor on the achievements of the supervised VRS in accordance with Section 5.15 above.

8 Responsibilities of a VRS

- 8.1 It is the responsibility of all VR students to:
- a) Make their own arrangements for accommodation for the period of their stay. It is strongly recommended that they do this prior to arrival in Liverpool.
 - b) Ensure that they have obtained the appropriate visa for the duration of their stay, including ATAS (if required) and to comply with UoL's Policy on UKVI Compliance (Student Route). Student visa holders are not permitted to attend UoL in the capacity of an unsupervised VRS.
 - c) Attend on a full-time basis during the entire duration of their visit unless they have been accepted on a part-time basis. Whilst it is understood that there may be short absences for conferences and other events, the School/Institute must be the primary base during the visit.
 - d) Conduct themselves in an appropriate and ethical manner.
 - e) Adhere to UoL's and the School/Institute's health and safety policies.
 - f) Maintain contact with their Supervisor at their home institution for the duration of their stay at UoL.
 - g) Become familiar with the various professional and specialist services for students, particularly in relation to health, counselling, finance, disability and immigration. See Section 10 for sources of further information.
- 8.2 In addition to the points given in section 8.1, *supervised* VR Students have the following additional responsibilities:
- a) Take responsibility for the planning of their project with their UoL Supervisor and to engage with their research in accordance with the agreement made prior to and during their registration period and including consideration of ethical implications.
 - b) Maintain a professional and courteous relationship with their Supervisor and to be prepared to receive critical feedback on their work. They are entitled to expect,

however, that any feedback will be provided by their Supervisor in a constructive and supportive way.

- c) Meet regularly (at least once per month) with the UoL Supervisor in accordance with the timetable of meetings agreed at the start of their visit.

9 UoL students visiting other institutions for a short period of time

9.1 The maximum period permitted for a UoL student to visit another institution is 12 (twelve) months. Should a student wish to attend another institution for a longer period they should discuss this with their Supervisor and consider the opportunities for a formal exchange agreement or off-sit/split-site agreement.

9.2 A UoL-registered research student who is studying at UoL on a Student visa may not relocate as a VRS at another institution.

9.3 The SDPR/IDPR, on behalf of the Dean of School/Institute, must approve the proposed visit to the remote institution prior to the visit. In order to do so the SDPR/IDPR must be provided with:

- a) Evidence that the visit is relevant to the student's research.
- b) A copy of the completed and signed student off-campus risk assessment form that is appended to the Code of Practice on Support and Safety of Students Off-Campus (available via the Safety Adviser's Intranet pages).
- c) Evidence of approved UoL travel insurance for the duration of the visit.
- d) Evidence of the host institution's acceptance of the student for the duration of the proposed visit, including contact details of the School/Institute and Supervisor at the remote institution.
- e) Confirmation of the student's current emergency contact details.

The approval must be in writing (e.g. by email), which must be kept on the School/Institute's student record and also copied to the Research Degree Administration Team (SAS) for central records.

9.4 The student and Supervisor must report to the SDPR/IDPR within 10 (ten) working days after returning from the visit to the remote institution.

10 Sources of further information

- [The PGR Code of Practice](#)
- [Safety and support for off campus activities](#)
- [Research Degree Administration Team \(SAS\)](#)
- [Student Complaints Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Guild of Students Advice Service](#)
- [International Recruitment and Admissions](#)
- [International Advice and Guidance](#)
- [UK Visas and Immigration](#)
- [PGR Handbook](#)

- [UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Academic Technology Approval Scheme \(ATAS\)](#)
- [Policy on UKVI Compliance \(Student Route\)](#)

Annexe 1: [Application Forms](#)

Annexe 2: [Offer letter template and reply slip](#)

Annexe 3: [Guidance notes for UoL hosting School/ Institute staff](#)

Annexe 4: [Completion record at end of stay](#)