

Visiting Academic Staff Appointment Procedure	
Enabling Policy Statement; Executive Owner; Approval Route:	Our Colleagues – Chief Operating Officer – Operations Committee
Is the Procedure for internal use only (Non- disclosable) ?	Disclosable
Associated Policy Statements:	N/A
Authorised Owner:	Human Resources Director
Authorised Co-ordinator:	Associate Director (People Services)
Effective date:	08 July 2025
Due date for full review:	08 July 2028
Sub documentation:	• Visiting Academic Staff – A guide to titles • Honorary Academic Staff Appointments (School of Medicine) • VSAC1 Medical School For new appointments (long-term) • VSAC1 for new appointments (Visiting Academics) • VSAC2 for re-appointments (Visiting Academics) • VSAC3 New appointments and re-appointments (Visiting Researchers)

Approval History

Version	Reason for review	Approval Route	Date
1.0	Migration to the POPP governance structure	Operations Committee	08 July 2025

1. Purpose

The Visiting Academic Staff Appointment Procedure provides a framework and process of appointing visiting academic staff members within the University. This procedure serves as a guiding document, ensuring clarity, consistency, and fairness in the appointment of visiting academics into our academic community.

2. Scope and Exceptions to the Procedure

The following procedures relate to the appointment of Visiting Academic and Clinical Staff in the categories of Professor, Associate Professor, Senior Lecturer, (Clinical) Senior Lecturer, Lecturer and (Clinical) Lecturer. There is a separate procedure for designating short-term visiting researchers, detailed in section 4.10.

This procedure does not form part of any employee's contract of employment. It may be amended from time to time with consultation with recognised trade union representatives if appropriate.

Visiting academics involved in teaching should also refer to the Code of Practice for Associate Tutors, Guest Speakers and Visiting Academics involved in Teaching: [Codes of practice | University of Surrey](#)

The following titles are covered by this procedure:

- Visiting Professor
- Visiting Associate Professor
- Visiting Clinical Associate Professor
- Visiting Senior Lecturer
- Visiting Clinical Senior Lecturer
- Visiting Lecturer
- Visiting Clinical Lecturer
- Visiting Researcher

3. Definitions and Terminology

N/A

4. Procedural Principles

The responsibility of managing the following processes will be held by an allocated staff member or department within the respective Faculty. An example of this is the Executive Assistant to the Executive Dean of the Faculty.

In determining the level of appointment, the decision will take account of the relevant experience, seniority, qualifications and/or publications (where appropriate) of the appointee, together with the nature of the duties and the planned contribution to the University. Professors and Associate Professors will be assessed on a similar basis to that used in making substantive appointments at the

same level (see Visiting Academic Staff Appointment – a guide to titles is on the HR SurreyNet Page <https://surreynet.surrey.ac.uk/hr-policies-and-forms>).

Occasionally, it is difficult to decide the appropriate level of an appointment. In such cases the final decision will be taken by the Executive Dean of the Faculty.

4.1. Period of appointment

Appointments are usually made for three years but may be for a shorter period if the Faculty wishes. All appointments are renewable subject to agreement of the proposal by the Executive Dean of Faculty. Appointments can start any time of year but will be concluded normally on 31 August or 31 January in the appropriate year and confirmed by letter.

4.2 Terms of appointment

Visiting Academic Staff cannot be employees of the University, this includes part-time employment entered into contractually. The appointment is an honorary one.

Appointments are offered on the basis that the duties attached to them will be agreed between the Executive Dean of Faculty (or, by delegated authority) and the appointee. In practice, Visiting Academic Staff are engaged in a wide range of activities including teaching, research, contract funding and external liaison etc. Any teaching responsibilities must be in line with the Code of Practice for Associate Tutors, Guest Speakers and Visiting Academics [Codes of practice | University of Surrey](#) involved in Teaching.

There is no University honorarium attached to Visiting Academic Staff appointments. Faculties may reimburse reasonable out of pocket expenses from their own funds subject to meeting the terms of the current University Travel and Expenses procedure: [staff-travel-and-expenses-procedure.pdf \(surrey.ac.uk\)](#)

Visiting Academic staff must familiarise themselves with the University Intellectual Property Code and both University and local Health and Safety Procedures before commencing their appointment and ensure they comply with these for the duration of their appointment. Like all academic staff, they will have a level of responsibility for ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of the students under their direction and supervision and have a duty to take care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions. In accepting their appointment, the Visiting Academic has agreed to be bound by the terms of the University Intellectual Property Code and its associated confidentiality provisions and, if they are involved in teaching, the University's Academic Regulations. [Academic and student regulations and procedures | University of Surrey](#)

The Intellectual Property Code of Practice can be viewed via the following link:
<https://www.surrey.ac.uk/innovation/our-innovators/our-intellectual-property-code>
or <https://www.surrey.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2020-12/intellectual-property-code.pdf>

Specifically, the visitor must be made aware of the 'Managing IP created by visitors to the University' section under the above referenced code of practice. This includes critical information regarding the impact of IP creation/collaboration and details the relevant process for making declarations in this regard. Please refer to the code of practice for further information. It is both the responsibility of the Visitor and the engaging Academic to ensure that the Visiting Staff member is aware of this term.

Any concerns regarding IP should be raised to the Technology Transfer Office in the first instance via trustedresearch@surrey.ac.uk

Visiting Academic Staff should conduct themselves in a professional and orderly manner during their appointment. Any occurrences of misconduct will be assessed by the Executive Dean of the Faculty or the Head of School to determine whether the appointment/offer should be withdrawn subject to a one-month notice period. Please note, a title may be withdrawn by the Vice-Chancellor at any time.

The relevant Executive Assistant or delegate will organise an email account and access to the University Library for the duration of the appointment.

4.3 Eligibility

All visiting staff/appointments must ensure they have the eligibility to enter and remain in the UK for the duration of assignment. Where necessary, the Academic may require appropriate Academic Visitor Visa Entry Clearance. Faculties are also reminded of the need, in some cases, to obtain Certificate of Sponsorships for Visiting Staff, normally via the Government Authorised Exchange Visa (Temporary Work) route, before they commence their appointment. Information on Certificate of Sponsorships and UKVI rules can be obtained from the HR Operations team hroperations@surrey.ac.uk. All eligibility to work documents must be verified and recorded by the relevant HR department/ Executive Dean of Faculty's Executive Assistant.

Certain visiting appointments may require obtaining an ATAS certificate. Please check link to see if this is necessary: <https://www.academic-technology-approval.service.gov.uk/>. Visiting Appointments are responsible for obtaining the ATAS certificate and can directly contact the hiring department for any necessary information. We will not issue a COS until the ATAS has been granted. '

Overseas visitors are not eligible to transfer from visiting status to employee of the University as this is against UKVI / Home Office Guidelines.

Faculties should make every effort to ensure that academic members of staff are aware that they may not invite foreign nationals to the University of Surrey on a visiting appointment without first investigating, with the Executive Dean of Faculty through HR Operations or the Executive Assistant of the relevant Faculty, the appropriateness of the appointment.

4.4 All Applications

Applications should be made on the most recent version of the VSAC form. There are three forms:

- VSAC1 for new appointments (Visiting Academics)
 - VSAC2 for re-appointments (Visiting Academics)
 - VSAC3 New appointments and re-appointments (Visiting Researchers)
- [HR procedures - Human Resources | Surreynet](#)

Applications can be submitted at any time during the year to the Executive Dean of Faculty. Any appointment which relates to a University, rather than a Faculty appointment, should be submitted to the Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation (where the appointment is focused on research) or the Pro Vice-Chancellor Education (where the appointment is mainly focused on teaching and learning)

Applications should be authorised by the Executive Dean of Faculty or in their absence the previously authorised delegate.

CVs should give details of publications rather than simply listing the number of publications.

Appointments can also be made directly by the President and Vice-Chancellor and by the Provost and

Senior Vice President, providing that the terms of appointment and process outlined in this procedure is adhered to. In such instances the Offices of the President and Vice-Chancellor and of the Provost and Senior Vice-President should liaise with the HR Department regarding completion of all necessary checks and recording of data on the new appointee.

4.5 Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) Condition for visiting researchers

ATAS and the UK National Security and Investment Act 2021 (referred to as NSIA)

The ATAS Condition may apply for overseas visitors coming to the University. An individual will be subject to the ATAS condition where the following applies:

The individual will be taking part in, or undertaking research at, Postgraduate level or above, as part of permitted academic activity, in a relevant subject to ATAS. This includes:

- Gathering information and facts for a specific project which directly relates to their employment overseas, or to support independent research;
- Taking part in formal exchange arrangements with UK counterparts,
- Carrying out research for their own purposes or as a group; and
- The individual is not an exempt national.

It is the host University's responsibility to check whether the visitor is subject to the ATAS condition.

If the individual is subject to the ATAS condition, the individual must apply for and obtain a valid ATAS certificate before the research starts. It is strongly recommended that the visitor obtains an ATAS certificate prior to travelling to the UK. Once a valid ATAS certificate has been issued, the individual must provide this to the host University and proof will be kept in secure electronic filing during the appointment and 2 years after to enable availability for any future audit.

Visiting appointments on a visitor visa who will be attending meetings, conferences, seminars or interviews, or giving speeches, and will not be undertaking research during their time in the UK, will not need to apply for an ATAS certificate.

A visitor from outside of the UK who is working on a dual-use technology will need to make sure that they have the following: appropriate permission from the local Government to export that technology from that country; and; once arrived in the UK, that they understand they are highly likely to need an export control license from the UK Government to export any new IP arising related to the dual-use technology back to their country.

The NSIA will apply to Visiting staff who are operating in one of the 17 defined areas indicated by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, the areas can be viewed via the following link:

[National Security and Investment Act: details of the 17 types of notifiable acquisitions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-security-and-investment-act-guidance-for-the-higher-education-and-research-intensive-sectors/national-security-and-investment-act-guidance-for-the-higher-education-and-research-intensive-sectors)

If operating in one of these areas the Visiting Academic and the engaging Surrey Academic will need to keep the University fully informed, via the Technology Transfer Office (trustedresearch@surrey.ac.uk), of who owns and controls the output of the Visitor Staff members research.

Further information on NSIA, what falls within its remit and how to make a notification can be found via the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-security-and-investment-act-guidance-for-the-higher-education-and-research-intensive-sectors/national-security-and-investment-act-guidance-for-the-higher-education-and-research-intensive-sectors>

[investment-act-guidance-for-the-higher-education-and-research-intensive-sectors](#)

If the requirements of NSIA are not followed the University will be entitled to end the Visiting appointment as it sees fit.

All University academics involved in recruiting to visiting appointments involving Sensitive Areas and persons based within or connected with a Sensitive Jurisdiction must undertake the steps outlined in Section 5.5 of the [Collaborating with Sensitive Jurisdictions in a Sensitive Area Procedure](#).

4.6 New appointments

Guidance on levels of appointment to the Visiting Academic Staff Appointments Procedures is given in the Visiting Academic Staff Appointment – a guide to titles on the HR SurreyNet Page <https://surreynet.surrey.ac.uk/hr-policies-and-forms>. This is particularly helpful when deciding on the appropriate title for non-academic applicants and Faculties are asked to refer to this.

Existing members of staff may not be submitted for visiting appointments.

Retiring members of staff being submitted for visiting appointments will not normally be considered for a visiting title higher than the title held on retirement (i.e. an Associate Professor should not be submitted for Visiting Professor status).

Departing members of staff being submitted for visiting appointments will not normally be considered for a visiting title higher than the title held on departure unless the position for which they are leaving the University is one which would, under the guidance in the Visiting Academic Staff Appointment Title Guide, normally support such a title.

Referees for all applications (VSAC 1 only) should be external and not internal.

E-mail references are acceptable. It is not necessary to take up references for former members of staff if the date of their new appointment is within 6 months of their departure date.

4.7 Re-appointments (VSAC2)

The **VSAC2** form should be used for re-appointments. This form should outline the achievements of the visiting member of staff in relation to their role at the University over the previous period. This may be in bullet form if that is more convenient.

An updated CV should be provided for any individual for re-appointments for a 2nd, 4th, 6th, (etc.) time (i.e. after the first re- appointment, every 2nd and alternate re-appointment thereafter must have an updated CV).

Also included on the VSAC 2 form should be an indication of the number of journal and conference publications, where applicable, in the CV supplied.

In addition to the VSAC 2 form being signed off by the Faculty Executive Dean, the relevant Head of School or Department must be informed of any potential extensions to current visiting academic appointments.

4.8 Procedure for new appointments (VSAC1)

Visiting Academic Staff are normally appointed to Faculties and the Executive Dean of Faculty is responsible for authorising proposals for new appointments.

Visiting staff may be assigned to a specific grouping within a Faculty, if appropriate.

Proposals for new appointments should be submitted to the Executive Dean of Faculty using a pro forma **VSAC1**. This completed pro-forma outlining case for the appointment must be accompanied by:

- the curriculum vitae of the nominee;
- a list of publications, where applicable, and any other relevant background material;
- two external references from referees who can testify to the candidate's suitability

It is the Faculty's responsibility to identify appropriate referees and to take up the references. Care should be taken in acquiring references.

On receipt of completed proposals, the Executive Dean of Faculty will review and make a decision on the applications within one month of the deadline.

Executive Deans of Faculty should bear in mind the guideline that at the time of initial appointment the number of visiting professorships in a Faculty should not normally exceed the number of substantive professorial appointments.

When an appointment is approved, the Executive Assistant or delegate will write to the applicant offering the appointment. The file of the appointee is held by the Faculty. The Faculties will hold a central log of visiting academics and generate the required email address and Library access and those visiting appointments that have been extended and the new end date of the appointment.

This information is important as some visiting staff will be eligible to attend University meetings and graduation, and this recording allows them to be invited to these events as appropriate.

4.9 Visiting academic staff appointments on retirement

It will not be 'normal' or 'standard' procedure to appoint retired members of staff as Visiting Academic Staff.

Where Visiting Academic Staff appointments for retired members of staff are of immediate benefit to the Faculty and/or University, an application should be submitted in the normal process.

Visiting Academic Staff appointments made immediately upon retirement will normally be in the same grade as that of the employee's former employment.

4.10 Procedure for extensions or retired visiting academic staff (VSAC2)

If a Faculty decides to request an extension of the appointment, a completed form (VSAC2) must be submitted as per the normal process indicating clearly and briefly a factual account of the member's contributions to the University activities in the previous period. An indication of the nature and extent of their expected future involvement should also be included. There is no further requirement for references.

4.11 Short term appointments (Visiting Researchers) (VSAC3)

A Faculty may wish to host a visiting academic for a short period not exceeding one year. This will normally be a post-doctoral candidate with sabbatical leave from an overseas institution who wishes to spend a period in a Faculty/Department engaged in research. Such an academic will be designated a Visiting Researcher (Form **VSAC3**).

The Visiting Researcher must be appropriately qualified and must be financially self-supporting. Faculties may contribute to modest out of pocket expenses (subject to the current University Expenses procedure). They must not pay any form of salary or stipend which would constitute employment. The Faculty may provide funds for travel, accommodation and subsistence costs through a funding grant from an external research council. Should a visa be required for entry to the UK, please refer to the sections above.

The Executive Dean of Faculty or the Head of School should authorise these appointments and satisfy themselves that the individual concerned is suitably qualified and that all necessary arrangements, including visas and eligibility to work, have been made well in advance of their arrival. It is the responsibility for the Faculty to maintain a file on the individual that should include the following: curriculum vitae of the visiting staff member; the proposed dates of appointment; the general area of research; confirmation of the visitor's main source of funding, where appropriate.

There is no requirement for references, but Faculties are expected to have satisfied themselves about the suitability of candidates.

The Faculty issues the relevant letter of appointment and ensures that the Visiting Researcher is recorded on the Faculty Visiting Academic spreadsheet. All paperwork associated with the appointment and extension of visiting staff appointments is held in the relevant faculty.

5. Governance Requirements

5.1. Implementation: Communication Plan

The procedure was embedded when first published.

5.2. Implementation: Training Plan

The procedure was embedded when first published.

Further support will be provided to colleagues implementing the procedure when required.

5.3. Review

This procedure will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner if required by a change in legislation or practice.

5.4. Legislative Context and Higher Education Sector Guidance or Requirements

This procedure is impacted by the UKVI's (Home Office) rules and regulations on visas related to visiting colleagues. Changes in legislation may see a change in procedure. Also:

- ATAS and the UK National Security and Investment Act 2021 (referred to as NSIA)

5.5. Sustainability

Hosting visiting academics contributes to SDG 4 by:

- **Enhancing teaching and research quality** through knowledge exchange.
- **Promoting global academic collaboration**, which fosters inclusive and diverse educational environments.
- **Creating opportunities for lifelong learning** through seminars, guest lectures, and collaborative research.
- **Improving institutional capacity** by sharing best practices, pedagogy, and innovations in education

6. Stakeholder Engagement and Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment was completed on 10 December 2024 and is held by the Authorised Co-ordinator.

Stakeholder Consultation was completed, as follows:

Stakeholder	Nature of Engagement	Request EB Approval (Y/N)	Date	Name of Contact
Governance	Review of V1.0	N	10 December 2024	Kelley Padley
H&S	Review of Version 1.0	N	24 January 2024	Matt Purcell
Sustainability	Review of Version 1.0	N	29 May 2025	Martin Wiles
Academic Registry	Check Code of Practices V1.0	N	15 May 2024	
HR	ATAS and visa compliance checks	N	15 May 2024	Jana Gurung
Faculty Administration	Review of procedure V1.0 and sub documentation	N	September 2024	Elizabeth Campbell/Elise Frost-Bridges
Innovation Strategy	Addition of Collaborating with Sensitive Jurisdictions Procedure at clause 4.5	N	October 2024	Elizabeth Bailey