

Policy Statement for Visiting Researchers, Scholars, Academics and Research Students

1. Context

Researchers, Scholars and Academics can be invited to the University of Westminster to benefit from and enrich our research culture, facilitate exchange of ideas and support interaction amongst like-minded researchers and scholars.

It is also recognised that researchers, scholars and academics may wish to establish a relationship with the University of Westminster to benefit from the knowledge and expertise available in specific academic areas within the University community.

The School should take a considered view about the benefit any such relationship will bring to the University and the likely costs/resources that will be involved in hosting a visiting researcher both as a School and University and make a decision about what charges will be levied. A table of fees is detailed at Annex 5. Any decision to waive a fee or fees should be supported by the Head of School or their nominated representative, e.g. School Research or PhD Coordinator

Visiting researchers can be considered as falling into three categories detailed below in the Policy Statement.

Normally all Visiting Researchers, Scholars and Academics will require:

- A user account to access academic resources, such as the Library and e-resources;
- A hot desk with access to a PC and Telephone
- ID card to grant access at the various University sites needed to undertake their research.
- A nominated supervisor/mentor during their stay at the University.

All will be required to:

- Participate in seminars and presentations (unpaid) when required;
- Be inducted and observe the requirements of the University
 - Framework for Research Governance and supporting Codes of Practice covering Research Good Practice, and Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research;
 - Safety Health and Well-being requirements; and
- Present appropriate documents to ascertain the right to work (including unpaid work) or study within the UK (as appropriate).

2. Policy Statement

This policy statement relates to the following three categories of researchers:

Category 1:

Visiting members of academic staff and researchers from other institutions. In almost all cases they come from outside the UK, and the majority from outside the EU. They tend to come for short periods of time, such as two to three months, but can stay for a period of up to one year with the right visa status.

Category 2:

Professionals, not employed by an academic institution, who do research in collaboration with a University of Westminster academic member of staff, e.g. Media, Arts & Design have worked with the former Head of the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association. These people are mainly UK/EU-based. If from outside of the EU, the length of stay will be subject to complying with UK Visas and Immigration (UK Home Office) rules.

Category 3:

Visiting research students, typically undertaking a PhD at their home institution. Some may be visiting under the terms of a doctoral collaborative partnership, who want to spend 6 months to a year with us, often receiving sponsorship from their home institution or government body. Nearly all are non-UK, and the majority are from outside the EU requiring a Tier 4 visa. The distinction between this category and category 1, is that these are fee-paying students formally enrolling on to a supervised period of study.

Procedure for the approval and invitation of a Visiting Researcher, Scholar or Academic (also see Annexe 1)

Researchers, Scholars and Academics in the three categories detailed above must be **neither**:

- Direct employees of the University of Westminster (e.g. contract researchers including Post- Doctoral Research Assistant (PDRAs) and Post-Doctoral Research Fellows (PDRFs), on funded research projects with a principal investigator in the College); nor
- Covered by the procedures for awarding 'Visiting Professor' status through the Professors and Readers Awarding Committee.

The status of Visiting Researchers, Scholars, Academics and Visiting Research Students are an honorary category of association where the benefits to the School are primarily research based. The 'Visiting' prefix indicates its temporary, fixed-term nature and distinguishes it from contract researchers.

- 1) Applications to the relevant School should clearly indicate the category of status requested.
- 2) Applications for the award of Visiting Researcher, Scholar or Academic status must be formally considered by the relevant School Research Coordinator and approved by the Head of School or his/her nominee. No person shall be invited without having received this approval.
- 3) In the case of Categories 1 and 2, HR have a category on SAP for 'Visiting Researchers' (VRs). This will be used only for genuine VRs who are not paid or employed in any way by the University. VRs once set up on SAP under this category will have access to the usual e-resources via Information Services. Requests for these accounts to be set-up should be signed off by the Head of School and the designated HR Partner using a [non-staff access form](#).
- 4) Up to date UK Visas and Immigration practices **must** be adhered to as outlined in Annexe 2

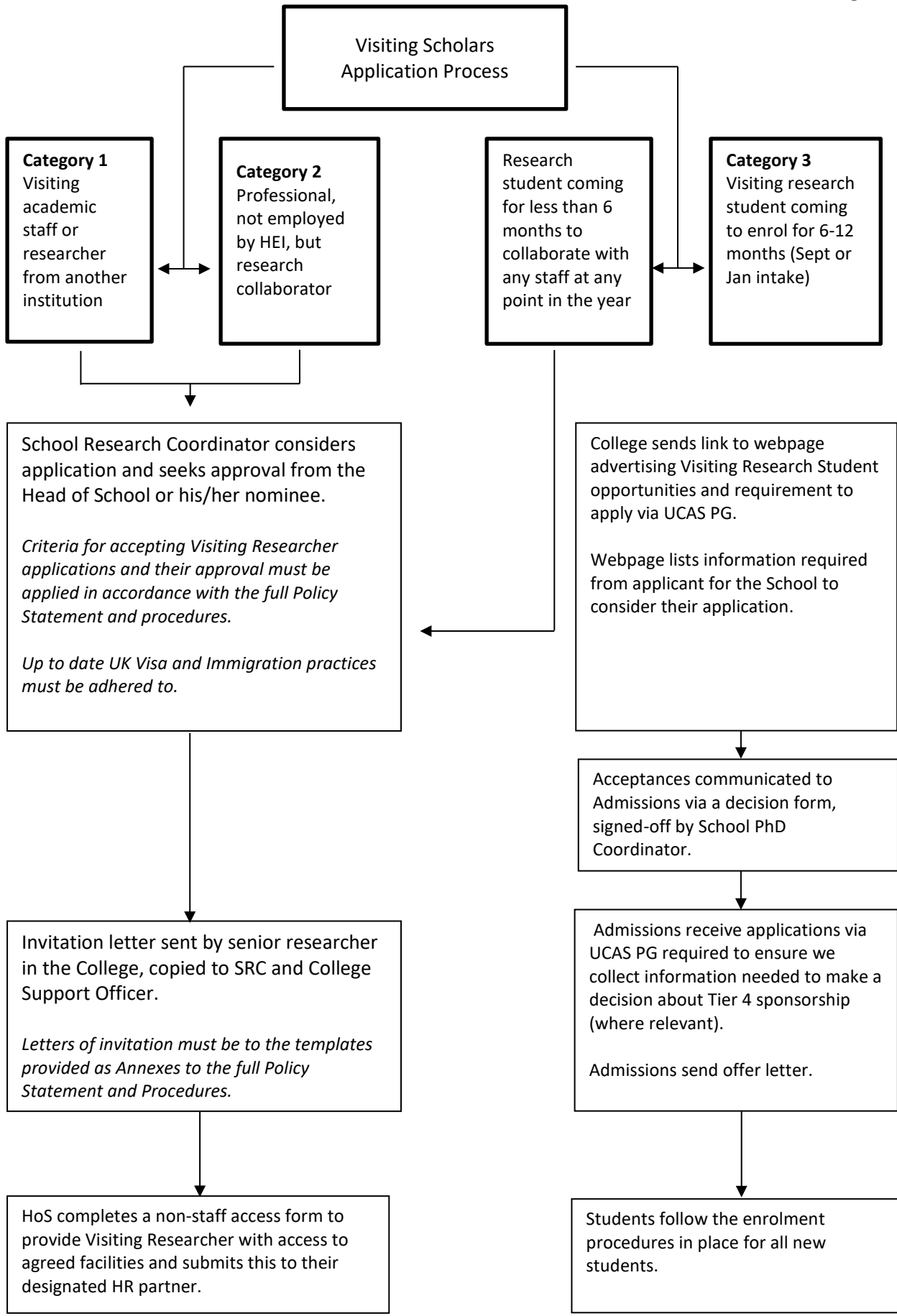
- 5) A letter of invitation must come from a senior researcher in the School (see Annexe 3 for an exemplar) and should be copied to the School Research Coordinator and College Support Officer. The letter of invitation should specify any requirements in terms of English language ability and should include a clear description of the agreed activities to be undertaken in order to ensure compliance with immigration legislation by both the individual and the University (From 21 November 2016, UKVI introduced a requirement that all “customer facing roles” (this could include students, business clients, etc) must be fluent in English). HR will require copies of their passport and visa, which have been verified in accordance with Home Office regulations (See Annex 3)
- 4) In the case of Category 3 Visiting Research Students (VRSs) coming for a period of 6 months to a year to enrol on a formal, supervised period of study, the procedure at Annexe 4 must be followed and the applicant must enrol as a Visiting Research Student of the University and comply with the UK Visas and Immigration rules applicable to students where appropriate. VRSs must demonstrate they will be:
 - Enrolled on a qualification at their home institution that is equivalent to a UK MPhil/PhD programme (FHEQ Level 8)
 - Undertaking full-time study
 - Receiving academic supervision from their home institution while in the UK
 - Able to meet the UK Visas and Immigration Service requirements for English language in force at the time.
- 5) Visiting Research Students (VRSs) must apply to the University via UCAS and enrol as a VRS on the University SITS Student Records System. A VRS on a Tier 4 Student Visa will be subject to enhanced UK Visas and Immigration monitoring requirements but may benefit from:
 - Being able to study for longer than six months
 - Bring dependents to the UK (on a programme of at least 9 months and subject to separate visa application and financial guarantees)
 - Being able to extend their stay, subject to the University’s agreement and meeting additional UK Visas and Immigration requirements, and
 - Being able to work part-time in the UK up to a maximum of 20 hours per week
- 6) Registering as a VR or VRS also declares that the Visiting Researcher will observe and comply with relevant University policies (e.g. Framework for Research Governance, Codes of Conduct for Research Good Practice and Research Ethics; Acceptable Use of IT Policy, etc.). All Visiting Researchers in possession of a visa, regardless of category, will need to have their attendance monitored by the College to ensure compliance with UK Visas and Immigration rules.
- 7) The invitation must be dependent upon a demonstrable association with a named UoW academic staff member; Research Centre, Cluster or Group.
- 8) The case for allowing access to University of Westminster resources must normally identify a material benefit to the core research activity of the School (from research grant co-applications/paper collaborations to contributions to teaching programmes) that is supported in writing by a relevant academic staff member.
- 9) Any invitation to visit should define a fixed time period - normally 6-12 months maximum. Registration and associated access to University systems and resources will be terminated at the end of this period.
- 10) The expectation is that Visiting Researchers, Scholars, Academics and Research Students

would be able to attend research events that are organised by the School, including regular research seminars. Depending on their particular research interest, VRs and VRSs would be encouraged to participate in presentations upon topics of their choosing at one of these seminars. In addition, VRs and VRSs would normally be welcome, subject to the permission of the relevant Lecturer, to attend classes in any of the School's undergraduate or postgraduate courses, either from the point of view of their intellectual content or their pedagogic style. VRs and VRSs will not normally be provided with their own office, but would have access to University premises, and be permitted to 'hot-desk' from areas that would be designated on their arrival by the host School, which will include the use of shared facilities.

- 11) Visiting Researchers, Scholars, Academics and Research Students will be expected to acknowledge an affiliation with the School and University in the authorship of any papers written during or relating to research undertaken during the period of the association.
- 12) Visiting Researchers, Scholars, Academics and Research Students must seek authorisation to use the University or School name, logo or brand from the College Research Director prior to use.
- 13) Visiting Researchers, Scholars, Academics and Research Students may be charged a fee to cover the costs associated with their visit. Charges will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the School and, in the case of Visiting Research Students, the Graduate School Board, taking into account any consumable costs, specialist resources, etc.
- 14) Applicants from outside the EU must be directed to the UK Visas and Immigration (UK Home Office) website. Evidence of the correct visa enabling them to participate in these activities in the UK, and to receive subsistence payments where appropriate, must be provided, and recorded on their arrival. Original documents must be provided; photocopies will not be accepted.
- 15) This Policy Statement will be reviewed at least biennially by the Research Committee, consulting where appropriate with the Graduate School Board and the Global Recruitment and External Affairs Directorate in relation to Visiting Research Students.

Revised: March 2019

Annex 1



Annex 2

HR Guidance on Visiting Researchers and the University of Westminster

As a leading practice focussed and researched engaged institution, the University encourages collaborative activity with researchers and students based in other institutions. When organising any reciprocal research arrangements, consideration must be made on the immigration status of the participant and the nature of activity that will be taken whilst on site at the University.

Prior to an offer of hosting a Visiting Researcher being made, either orally or in writing, the visiting researcher must be made aware that it is their responsibility to ensure that they obtain the correct visa to enable them to participate in the activities proposed. If any payments will be made to Researchers for activity undertaken, please contact your HR Partner to ensure the necessary preparations are made and correct documentation is copied and filed.

Upon arrival on a University site, a [non-staff access form](#) should be completed for the Visiting Researcher and sent to HR with a copy of their eligibility to reside in the UK attached *i.e. you must take a copy and sign it to confirm that you have seen the original*. **Please see Part 2- How to check eligibility**

If you have any queries or concerns about an individual's eligibility to work or reside in the UK then please contact HR before making an offer of hosting a Visiting Researcher.

Please be aware that the responsibility to check eligibility applies to all Visiting Researchers and Professors irrespective of their nationality or the type of research offered.

Without appropriate copies of the passport no lawful access to systems or buildings will be provided.

Visiting staff are required to have an appropriate visa regardless of whether they are receiving payment or not.

How to check eligibility

If you have any doubts or are not familiar with a visa that is presented to you, please speak to a member of the HR Services Team.

From 1st January 2017 onwards we will only accept a current passport or biometric residence permit as proof of ID for the purposes of right to work checks.

- Passports held by a British Citizen (or a citizen of the UK and Colonies having a right of abode in the UK) or a national of a European Economic Area (EEA) country or Switzerland do not have to be current to be valid. The passport can be expired and it can still be accepted as proof of ID.
- Passports from any other country do have to be current to provide a valid excuse - expired passports cannot be accepted.
- Biometric Residence Permits must be current to be valid.
- Where the visa presented is stamped in the applicant's passport this passport must be current at the time of appointment, in order to be valid.

In the very rare case that an individual does not have a passport please speak to the HR Services team for advice.

Eligibility checks should always be made before an individual begins work (including unpaid work)

You must see the original passport/BRP- scanned copies or photocopies are not acceptable.

- Take a legible copy of the page containing the photo- please review the copy of the picture to ensure it is not distorted. If you cannot clearly see the individual's face then it is not an acceptable copy.
- If applicable – take a copy of the valid visa and/or stamps in the passport that relate to rights to work and any supporting documentation from the Home Office.
- Check that all details in your copies are clearly visible e.g. not covered over, blurred or distorted- you should be able to clearly read all writing and numbers.
- Ensure that you have taken a full copy of any relevant pages - sides of passports/visas or documents should not be cut off.
- On each page of the copies you have taken please declare “the date on which this right to work check was made is (insert date)”, then sign and print your name.
- You should ensure, when you print your name, that it is legible so it is clear who has undertaken the check.
- Please ensure your writing does not cover any part of the passport; your declaration should be made in the space on the same page, next to, but not covering, the passport copy.

You should take colour scans or photocopies, as this provides a clearer and more accurate copy of the original.

Please be aware that when authorising a copy of a passport you are confirming that you as individual;

- Have had sight of the original document and the individual concerned;
- Have checked that the date of birth and photograph in the documents correspond with the individual's appearance; and
- That the document appears to be genuine, not tampered with and belongs to the individual.

If they have a visa;

Check the quality of the visa. Ensure that;

- The name is spelled correctly
- The date of birth matches the details on the photo page of the passport
- Check the end date and status of the visa
- If the visa is in their passport, check that the passport is current

If you have any queries or concerns about a member of staff's eligibility to work then please flag this to Human Resources before making an offer of employment.

Please be aware that the responsibility to check eligibility applies to all staff and

workers paid by the University, irrespective of their nationality or the type of work offered.

Without appropriate copies of the passport no payments will be made and no lawful access to systems or buildings provided.

Information Security and Compliance have advised that it is not appropriate to send copies of ID documents via email as they contain personal sensitive data. Please ensure that ID documents are sent securely through the mail or, with the individual's permission, shared via Sharepoint.

Template Letter of Invitation

On University headed paper:

It gives me great pleasure to formally invite you to our institution as a Visiting Researcher/Scholar in the xxx Group in the School of xxx at this University for the months xxx inclusive. We very much look forward to the opportunity of exchanging ideas with you concerning topics of mutual interest.

We understand that during this period you will be carrying out research on xxx, as set out in your research plan. We have read your proposal with interest and confirm that that it falls within the scope of our broad research discipline <e.g. Communication and Media>.

The terms of this invitation are as follows:

You will be provided with an ID card which will provide you with buildings access, access to the University's wi-fi and the University Library and its electronic resources. You are welcome to attend any of the research events that are organised by us, including our regular research seminars. <At this point please indicate the purpose of the visit – this is essential to support any visa application, and to clarify to the Home Office the University's expectations of the association>.

In addition, you are welcome, with the permission of the appropriate Lecturer, to attend classes in any of our undergraduate or postgraduate courses that interest you, either from the point of view of their intellectual content or their pedagogic style. You will have access to our premises, shared computing facilities and will be able to hot-desk from areas that we will designate on your arrival. The fee for accessing these facilities will be £<?> for the year (pro-rata for a part-year).

To enter the UK and accept this invitation, you need to ensure that you are eligible to participate in the above activities. For advice on whether you require a visa and the most applicable visa for your circumstances please access the UK Visas and Immigration website (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration>).

Please consider this letter an official letter of invitation. If the British Embassy Visa Section has any further queries about the conference they can contact me on *****email***, *****phone***

If you are a Visiting Research Student coming to enrol for 6-12 months on a supervised period of study, this invitation is provisional and subject to you completing an application for admission as a Visiting Research Student in the School of <?> via UCAS (include URL), meeting our entry criteria and completing the enrolment process as a student.

Please can you inform me at your earliest opportunity of the type of visa/eligibility status you will be entering the UK under so that we can keep this on record. Once you arrive in the UK, we will need to see your original passport and visa (if applicable) and take a copy for our records.

The following paragraph should be included if we have no prior involvement with the researcher, or knowledge of their English language ability: In order that your time with us is as rewarding as

possible, we ask that you provide us with evidence of your English language proficiency, i.e. an IELTS score of 6.5, with at least 6.0 in all individual elements. A copy should be sent to me by return, and you should bring the original document with you to the University so that we can take a copy of the original for our records.

If there is any further information you would like about these arrangements, please do feel free to write directly to me. I look forward to welcoming you to the University of Westminster.

Signed

cc School Research Coordinator
College HR Manager (for Visiting Researchers that require non-staff access)
Admissions (for Visiting Researchers applying as a student)

Graduate School Visiting Research Student (category 3)

If a visiting research student wishes to enrol with the University for 6 or 12 months, they will require a visa to study in the UK, and they will enrol on a programme in September or January at the same time as all new research degree students.

Students enrolling for a 6 or 12-month programme will be aligned with the start dates for the research degree programmes to provide visiting research students with the same experience as our students, enabling them to attend enrolment, University and School induction, and embed themselves in the research culture.

Admissions process

The Graduate School Board will establish a webpage advertising visiting research student opportunities, with contact details for each School, and a link to the UCAS PG application process.

The School will ask for the following as part of an application (see Decision Form in Annexe 5):

Qualifications, including English language; whether they are doing a PhD; which stage they are at; what area of research is it in; does their University support them in this visit; why are they coming; how they will pay any fees and living expenses; how long they wish to come to the University for.

We will ask for IELTS score of 6.5 minimum, with 6.0 in each element of the assessment (or equivalent).

Acceptances are communicated to the student via the letter template (Annexe 3), and to Admissions via a Decision Form (Annexe 5).

All students will be directed at the earliest opportunity to apply via UCAS PG to ensure that we collect all the relevant information to make a decision and to issue a Tier 4 Student Visa (where relevant).

Visa requirements

If the student has a Tier 4 Student Visa the University must monitor their attendance in accordance with the Graduate School UK Visas and Immigration Engagement Policy. Graduate School Registry would establish the 10 contact points with the supervisor at the time of enrolment and it would be the responsibility of the supervisor to report any missing contact to the Graduate School Registry. The Graduate School Registry would include them in the end of term audit.

In order to prove that the student is visiting the UK as part of their research degree in their home country, at the end of their time at the University of Westminster, the student must provide a 2,000 word progress report to their Director of Studies. The Director of Studies must then mark them as pass or fail and report this to the Graduate School Registry, School PhD Coordinator Research Director and the student's home University.

Any student who requires a visa, and whose research falls under the relevant HECOS codes, will require an Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate.

Fees

The fee will be set at the overseas rate, and if variable fees are approved, the lowest price band

will be used for all programmes (Annexe 6). Fees will be calculated on a pro-rata basis based on the number of months the student is enrolled for.

Specific reference to these fees will need to be included in the Graduate School Fees paper.

If it is thought that a fee waiver is appropriate it would be established using the normal procedures for research degree students.

Research Practice

The same rules that apply to all research students would apply to visiting research students in relation to Intellectual Property; Research Governance and Research Ethics.

Responsibilities

At School level the supervisor and School PhD Coordinator (or nominee) will take responsibility for the student.

It is suggested that they are included in the Annual Progress Review, however, the School would only be required to provide the 2,000-word report.

The Global Recruitment and Admissions Directorate will be responsible for recruitment.

The Graduate School Registry will be responsible for enrolment and UK Visas and Immigration attendance monitoring.

Annexe 5

Visiting Research Student Applicant - Decision Form

UoW College and School	
Name of prospective visiting research student	
Name of allocated UoW supervisor(s)	
Qualifications attained	
English language ability: 6.6, with minimum 6.0 in each individual element	
Current programme of study at home institution (must be full-time and equivalent to UK FHEQ Level 8)	
Name of home academic institution and their academic supervisor	
Area of research, and stage they are at	
Reason for coming	
How will long they wish to come to the University for (between 6-12 months, commencing January or September)	
Fee and how their fees and living expenses will be paid	
Authorised signatory* confirming that the College has accepted the application and would like Admissions to issue UKPASS link and offer letter	Print name:
	Signature:
Date	

**In signing this, the Research Director (or his nominee) is also providing confirmation that the supervisor will meet with the student 10 times per year (or pro rata) to comply with the UK Visas and Immigration attendance monitoring requirements.*

Form to be returned to Amanda Craig in Admissions.

Annexe 6

Schedule of fees for Visiting Research students

The fee will be set at the University's standard fee for research degrees (Standard University rate) for all programmes – 2019/20, and 2020/21. Fees will be calculated on a pro rata basis based on the number of months the student is enrolled for.

The fees, based on the standard university full-time rate are as follows:

<i>Duration of study</i>	<i>Overseas Fee 2019/20</i>	<i>Home/EU Fee 2019/20</i>	<i>Overseas Fee 2020/21</i>	<i>Home/EU Fee 2020/21</i>
<i>12 months</i>	<i>13,300</i>	<i>5,200</i>	<i>13,700</i>	<i>5,360</i>
<i>11 months</i>	<i>12,210</i>	<i>4,760</i>	<i>12,560</i>	<i>4,910</i>
<i>10 months</i>	<i>11,100</i>	<i>4,335</i>	<i>11,410</i>	<i>4,470</i>
<i>9 months</i>	<i>9,990</i>	<i>3,900</i>	<i>10,275</i>	<i>4,020</i>
<i>8 months</i>	<i>8,880</i>	<i>3,470</i>	<i>9,130</i>	<i>3,575</i>
<i>7 months</i>	<i>7,770</i>	<i>3,030</i>	<i>8,000</i>	<i>3,125</i>
<i>6 months</i>	<i>6,660</i>	<i>2,600</i>	<i>6,850</i>	<i>2,680</i>
<i>5 months</i>	<i>5,550</i>	<i>2,170</i>	<i>5,710</i>	<i>2,235</i>
<i>4 months</i>	<i>4,440</i>	<i>1,740</i>	<i>4,570</i>	<i>1,790</i>
<i>3 months</i>	<i>3,330</i>	<i>1,300</i>	<i>3,425</i>	<i>1,340</i>
<i>2 months</i>	<i>2,220</i>	<i>870</i>	<i>2,290</i>	<i>895</i>
<i>1 month</i>	<i>1,110</i>	<i>435</i>	<i>1,140</i>	<i>450</i>