Visiting Academic Policy

Please note that the Policy is currently under review.

1. Introduction

1. The Open University (OU) has always welcomed a wide variety of visiting academics and values the contributions which can be made by them. We encourage the appointment of such individuals, including non-academic specialists working with OU academics in areas such as research impact and enterprise. We also welcome Associate Lecturers (ALs) with research interests that their faculty agrees contributes to that unit's research and scholarship plans.

2. Visiting academic status is granted under the authority of the Senate. The administration and approval process is managed by the Faculties. There are Guidance Notes and a Nomination Form for this process.

3. There are three titles for visiting academics attached to the University (see below) and these are referred to as visiting academics throughout this policy. The particular roles agreed with the visiting academic must be set out in a written role description with clear objectives.

4. If a visiting academic is coming to the UK from outside the UK, the Overseas Academic Visitor Policy applies in addition to this policy. If any of the terms in the Overseas Academic Visitor Policy contradict the other terms in this policy, the Overseas Academic Visitor Policy will have precedence. Visiting academics will need to ensure that they have obtained an Academic Technologies Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate before they commence any research activities if they meet the requirements set out by the scheme [Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) - (www.gov.uk)](www.gov.uk).

2. Visiting status

Visiting Professor

5. If the proposed visiting academic has already been awarded the title of Professor from another reputable university, then the Faculty can approve the use of this title. If an academic does not already carry the title of Professor, a case can be made to the Executive Dean of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) to confer the title on behalf of the Chair and Readership Subcommittee (CRSC). A faculty may also propose conferring the title of Visiting Professor on a non-academic of appropriate standing where national or international recognition is deemed equivalent and the person has relevant expertise and experience in the use and application of research. Decisions will be made by the Executive Dean of EDI on behalf of the CRSC.

Visiting Fellow

6. The Faculty can confer this title on all visiting academics who are not Professors. The Faculty can also award this title to visiting non-academic staff of appropriate standing.

Honorary Associate

7. This title can be conferred on OU academic and research staff who retire or leave employment due to other commitments such as care responsibilities and who wish to continue an academic involvement with their faculty and are not Professors (in which case, see the Emeritus Professor Policy). In exceptional circumstances, this title can be conferred on other categories of staff (academic related and support staff) who meet the criteria for visiting status and where the faculty agrees that their research contributes to the Unit's research and scholarship plan.

8. This title can also be conferred on OU AL staff who meet the criteria for visiting status and where the Faculty agrees that their research contributes to the Faculty's research plan. This category cannot be used for any teaching duties and is entirely separate to the AL's employment contract. It is an honorary position only. The same nomination form and process should be used as for those categories above.

3. Eligibility

9. The period of attachment must coincide with the activities visitors are undertaking and will not normally be more than three years in the first instance. Attachments are renewable with no maximum time period. This paragraph does not apply to visiting academics coming to the UK from outside the UK (see Overseas Academic Visitor Policy).

10. If the annual report does not provide evidence of on-going value or of objectives being met, or if the visiting academic contravenes University policies, then the University reserves the right to curtail the visiting attachment immediately. If any issues arise, these should be discussed with the Faculty, who will be able to offer advice on the next course of action.

11. Some visiting academics to the University may join on a full time basis. They would normally hold substantive academic or other posts elsewhere and must be planning to spend a minimum of one month at the University to be eligible for visiting status. This paragraph does not apply to visiting academics coming to the UK from outside the UK (see Overseas Academic Visitor Policy).

12. Faculty sponsors who wish visiting academics to continue their association with the University after their three-year term, must make a case in writing to the Associate Dean (Research) or equivalent of the Faculty.

4. Responsibilities

13. All visiting academics are nominated by an individual sponsor within a Faculty. The sponsor takes full responsibility for the visitor during the period of their attachment. Visiting academics must abide by the policies, regulations and procedures of the University, including but not limited to the University's Intellectual Property Policy, Code of Practice for Research, research ethics policies and procedures (e.g. the Procedure for Dealing with Allegations of Academic Malpractice or Misconduct and the Ethics Principles for Research Involving Human Participants), health and safety requirements and data protection

requirements.

14. It is the responsibility of the sponsor to arrange for an appropriate induction for visiting academics attending the University. This is especially important for safety reasons e.g. fire evacuation, but also to ensure that visitors to the University are made welcome during their stay. Visitors' attention must be drawn to the University's policies and procedures that apply to research and working at the OU.

15. Sponsors should ensure that visiting academics, where required, are provided with office and/or laboratory space as required by their agreed role description. They must also ensure that their Deanery has arranged for a temporary visitor pass, any required keys, an OUCU, an email address and access to the Library. When the visitor leaves or ends their term, it is the Faculty's responsibility to ensure these facilities and resources are removed.

16. Sponsors should arrange for appropriate objectives to be set for the term of the visit, and for an annual short report to be sent to the Associate Dean (Research) or equivalent, to ensure that the University is gaining the value from the visitor as first proposed.

17. The University cannot offer remuneration under the Visiting Academic Policy. This is especially critical for guests on visitor visas from outside of the UK. However, expenses incurred in travelling on University business during the period of appointment, approved by the Associate Dean (Research) or equivalent, may be reimbursed in accordance with the University's Travel and Subsistence Policy.

18. People Services will advise on immigration queries for visiting academics, as appropriate. Immigration checks must be conducted on all visiting academics under this policy, following the principles of the Right to Work Procedures. The Unit is responsible for ensuring the Sponsorship Reporting Duties, as per the Right to Work Procedures, are followed for those visitors who enter the UK from outside the UK. In addition, an ATAS certificate must be in place prior to research activities commencing, if required. If the University is non-compliant in this area, the licence to recruit from overseas could be removed by UK Visas and Immigration.

5. Approval

19. This policy was approved by the Senate in June 2013 and will be reviewed on a five-yearly basis to ensure fitness for purpose.

6. Equality, diversity and inclusion

Policies are inclusive of all Open University staff, regardless of age, care experience, caring status or dependency, civil status, disability, family status, gender, gender expression, gender identity, gender reassignment, marital status, marriage and civil partnership, membership of the Traveller community, political opinion, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic background or trades union membership status.

7. Useful references

Visiting Academic Nomination Form
Visiting Student Nomination Form (Graduate School Network)
Immigration Document Checks for Visiting Academics
Overseas Academic Visitor Policy
Immigration Routes for Academic Visitors
Right to Work Procedures
Travel and Subsistence Policy

ATAS Summary Statement of Research Template
Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) - (www.gov.uk)
UK Visas and Immigration - (www.gov.uk)