

Visiting Researchers Policy at the RCA

Visiting Researchers from higher education institutions in the UK and internationally are welcome at the RCA, in recognition of the benefits and enrichment they offer to the individuals involved and to the RCA's research environment.

This policy sets out guidelines and protocols to ensure all visiting researchers are treated fairly and supported appropriately during their time at the RCA.

Principles

1. Visiting researchers to the RCA are welcomed for the enrichment they bring to the individuals involved and to the College's research environment.
2. A potential visiting researchers or their home institution may approach the RCA with a proposal, or a member of academic staff at the RCA may initiate discussions with a potential visiting researcher. Permission must be sought and received from the Director of Research and Innovation, the relevant Dean or Centre Director, and the relevant HR Manager, before any formal agreement is made. Visiting researchers must be able to provide evidence of their right to work and/or live in the UK before commencing the role (see Appendix 1 on International Visiting Researchers).
3. In line with standard practice, visiting researchers to the RCA should be charged a fee as a contribution to the costs of overheads and consumables incurred during their visit (this is often known as a 'bench fee').
4. The bench fee is £1,000 per term (£3,000 per academic year) for the academic year 2018-19. The bench fee will be calculated pro-rata according to the length of the visit, with a minimum charge of £1,000. The bench fee will be paid to the hosting School or Centre.
5. The bench fee may be reduced or waived at the discretion of the Director of Research and Innovation and the relevant Dean or Centre Director. This could be the case, for example, where the visiting fellow is making a demonstrable contribution to research activity and research income at the RCA or is funded by external funding sources.
6. The duration of a visit should not normally exceed 12 months. Any request to extend a visit beyond 12 months must be agreed by the Director of Research and Innovation and the relevant Dean or Centre Director following consultation with the relevant HR Manager. International visitors will be limited to the duration of their visa.
7. Visiting researchers may be early career researchers, more established researchers or industry professionals who wish to develop their research career by undertaking a visiting researcher post at the RCA.
8. A visiting researcher will be given the title Visiting Research Fellow.

9. The visiting researcher should be undertaking research in a field relevant to the RCA's and the relevant School or Research Centre's research strategy, and should have a clear research plan in place by the start of their visit, setting out what research, and other relevant activities, if appropriate, they expect to undertake, and what facilities, equipment and other support and provision will be required. For example, visiting researchers who have the right to live and work in the UK may undertake some MA teaching, doctoral supervision, seminars, crits and lectures, and bidding for and delivering funded research projects. These activities would be unpaid, and undertaken on an occasional, guest basis.
10. International visiting researchers who have entered the UK under a Visitors' visa will not be able to undertake work, either paid or unpaid.
11. Visiting researchers will normally be provided with access to shared desk space, access to College premises, facilities and resources, and access to an academic mentor working in a field relevant to their project, who will provide advice and oversight of the visiting researcher's work during their time at the RCA.
12. The academic mentor at the RCA should be identified and approved by the Director of Research and Innovation and the relevant Dean or Centre Director in advance of the visiting researcher's arrival.
13. If a researcher is working both for the RCA and another organisation on similar projects involving IP, there is an expectation that the researcher will notify their RCA manager of any potential conflicts of interest so that precautions can be taken which may also involve confidentiality precautions.
14. The RCA will not provide accommodation or accommodation expenses, travel expenses, a salary, or any degree qualification, as part of the visiting researcher arrangements..
15. Once the visiting researcher arrangements are confirmed by the relevant Dean or Centre Director and the Director of Research & Innovation, HR will gather the visiting researcher's personal details, create a personal file and generate a letter confirming the appointment. This letter will set out clearly the start date, duration, bench fee, visa status and any visa restrictions (where applicable), and expectations of what the RCA will provide (e.g. access to space, resources, mentoring/supervision) and of what it will not provide (accommodation, travel costs, salary, degree qualification).
16. Upon joining the RCA the visiting researcher must receive a full induction from the host School or Research Centre, using the College's standard induction checklist: <https://intranet.rca.ac.uk/local-induction-checklist/>.

Appendix 1

International Visiting Researchers

Visitor's visa route

International visiting researchers may enter the UK on a Visitor's visa for up to 12 months, but must not do paid or unpaid work. The rules state:

They must prove they are highly qualified within their field of expertise, on sabbatical leave from their registered home institution and visiting to either:

- *take part in a formal exchange with a UK counterpart*
- *carry out their own research*
- *take part in someone else's research, teaching or clinical practice - as long as this does not involve filling a permanent teaching post*

(See <https://www.gov.uk/standard-visitor-visa/eligibility>)

Other rules state:

V 4.22 *An academic/researcher applying for a 12 month visit visa (standard) must intend to do one (or more) of the permitted activities set out in paragraph 12 of Appendix 3; and:*

- (a) be highly qualified within their own field of expertise; and*
- (b) currently working in that field at an academic institution or institution of higher education overseas; and*
- (c) if required under paragraph A39 and Appendix T Part 1 of these Rules, provide a valid medical certificate issued by a medical practitioner listed in Appendix T Part 2 of these Rules confirming that they have undergone screening for active pulmonary tuberculosis and that this tuberculosis is not present in the applicant*

(See:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-v-visitor-rules>)

Visitors Appendix 3 states:

11 *Scientists and researchers may:*

- (a) gather information and facts for a specific project which directly relates to their employment overseas;*
- (b) share knowledge or advise on an international project that is being led from the UK, provided the visitor is not carrying out research in the UK.*

12 *Academics (including academic researchers) may:*

- (a) take part in formal exchange arrangements with UK counterparts (including doctors);
- (b) carry out research for their own purposes if they are on sabbatical leave from their home institution;
- (c) if they are an eminent senior doctor or dentist, take part in research, teaching or clinical practice provided this does not amount to filling a permanent teaching post.

Tier 5 sponsored visa route

Alternatively, the RCA can sponsor international researchers for a Tier 5 visa as a “sponsored researcher” under the government authorised exchange scheme for up to 12 or 24 months. This visa allows someone to come to the RCA for work experience or to do training, research or a fellowship for a temporary period.

RCA will provide the researcher with a certificate of sponsorship reference number so that they can apply for a Tier 5 visa. The visiting researcher will pay the cost of their visa and will need to pay the healthcare surcharge. In addition, the researcher will need to have £945 in savings - this is to prove they can support themselves and they must have had this in their bank account for 90 consecutive days before they apply. Alternatively, their home institution can pay the RCA for the researcher’s maintenance and accommodation and HR will certify that the RCA will undertake their maintenance costs.

The visiting researcher on a Tier 5 visa can:

- work in the job described in their [certificate of sponsorship](#)
- do a second job for up to 20 hours per week
- do a job on the [Tier 2 shortage occupation list](#) for up to 20 hours per week as well as their main job
- apply to change (‘switch’) into a [Tier 1 Exceptional Talent visa](#) if they’re in the government authorised exchange scheme for sponsored researchers
- bring [family members](#) with them

The visiting researcher cannot:

- take a permanent job
- get [public funds](#)

For more information see:

<https://www.gov.uk/tier-5-government-authorised-exchange> and
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/640226/Tier_5_TW_Policy_Guidance_-_final.pdf

For potential visiting students please refer to the [Post Experience Programme](#).