

# Official Visitor Agreement (OVA) Process

## *Guidelines: How to invite a Visiting Scholar per MSU AOP 13.22*

For links to forms visit [Official Visitor Agreements \(OVA\) | Office of Research Compliance & Security \(msstate.edu\)](#)

**Step 1:** Complete a Visitor Packet which includes the following:

A. Official Visitor Agreement

Helpful tips:

- The title of the OVA document (top page 1) - the OVA agreement should be between MSU and a foreign or other collaborating entity. Information entered here will automatically populate the footer on all pages of this document.
- The collaborating entity is the other institution/employer (not the visitor themselves).
- The only exemption is if a scholar is still a student, then the visiting student can sign the Official Visitor Agreement herself/himself and is considered to be the “collaborating entity.”
- The effective date is the day the process begins, not the first date of the visit.
- Beginning and ending dates need to match the dates on the DS-2019 request form (for international visitors).
- Insert the correct name and proper title for all signature authorities.
- Prior to being sent to the Office of Research Compliance and Security (ORC&S), the OVA must be signed (page 6) by the authorized representative of the other home institution, someone who can legally commit that entity; insert the date when the signature was obtained. The signature can be scanned but not digital.
- Insert “N/A” if a signature is not applicable.
- If the visitor is to a DAFVM unit, the VP DAFVM signature will be obtained by ORC&S. The signature of VP for Research and Economic Development will be obtained by ORC&S if research is involved. The Director of Procurements and Contracts is a signatory authority for non-research, and the Provost for academic OVAs.
- All visitors must sign the acknowledgement at the bottom (page 6) of the agreement.

B. Attachment A - Project Description (is a separate Attachment A form)

- The information on this form must be supplied by the MSU collaborator, not the visitor. If a description of the project is on a separate page, insert “Attachment A” on top.
- In required Attachment A Project Description include why the MSU collaborator is inviting a visiting scholar to MSU and describe the activities that will be performed by a visiting scholar while at MSU, describe the research objectives.
- Describe how you met or were introduced to the visitor and any past or current collaborations with the visitor.
- Identify all MSU research labs or university facilities that the visitor will need to access to conduct the activities.
- Is the research professor’s program externally funded? If so, who is the sponsoring agency?

- Where will the visiting scholar's office be housed?
- Must match what is on the DS-2019 request form (for international visitors requesting J1 visa).
- All questions on the Attachment A form must be answered.

C. OVA Contract Cover Sheet and Routing Form

This form must be completed and signed by the host faculty member, department head, dean if within a college or director if within a university center or institute.

Helpful tips:

- Department contact – typically MSU department's business coordinator, manager, etc.
- Collaborating entity is the employer of a visitor – the other institution. Exception: student enrolled at the other institution who isn't a regular employee.

D. Visitor's CV

Enclose a professional CV for the international visitor/visiting scholar.

E. Letter of Invitation

Use template for visiting scholar located here: [Official Visitor Agreements \(OVA\) | Office of Research Compliance & Security \(msstate.edu\)](#)

**Sections F - H of the Visitor Packet are for international visiting scholars requesting J visa. Skip to Step 2 for visiting U.S. Citizens and Permanent Residents or visitors not requesting J visa.**

F. DS-2019 Request Form

Link to form: <https://www.international.msstate.edu/files/DS2019Request.pdf>

Helpful tips:

- Do not leave any parts of the form blank. Insert "N/A" if needed.
- Make sure the visitor's name on the form matches exactly their name as it appears on their passport. This also applies for each dependent if applicable.
- Beginning and ending dates need to match the dates in the OVA form.
- The description of research and subject material should be a summary of the information submitted with Attachment A.
- To assess visiting scholar's English language fluency, a language certification is included in section V of this form or attach a separate language skills proof certificate if applicable.
- Signature of MSU Faculty Mentor/Supervisor and Signature of Department Head must be obtained before being sent to ORC&S. Signatures can be digital.
- Departmental Charge Form is a part of the DS-2019 request form, and must be fully completed (print name, title, date, phone, email) and signed before being sent to ORC&S.

G. Copy of Visitor's Passport (and any dependent's)

Submit a current passport copy of a page with biographical info and a photograph for the visitor and each dependent if applicable.

H. Funding Source

Supply relevant financial documents and attach a US dollar currency conversion if applicable.

***All attachments must be in English.***

**Step 2:**

All departments: Once the Visitor Packet is completed, send the complete Visitor Packet to the Office of Research Compliance and Security (ORC&S) – Mail Stop 9563.

**Step 3:** After the Restricted Party Screening (RPS) is completed and no negative results are received, appropriate MSU authority will sign the Official Visitor Agreement. ORC&S will coordinate with the Office of Research and Economic Development (ORED) and VP DAFVM office (if DAFVM department) to obtain the approval signatures. ORC&S will rout the approved and signed OVA to the department for distribution and DS-2019 request form will be sent to the International Services Office (ISO) in support of issuance of DS-2019 form.

**Step 4:** After ISO receives the DS-2019 request form from ORC&S, a DS-2019 will be issued and the departmental representative will be contacted to pick it up.

**Step 5:** A department can extend a letter of invitation to the visiting scholar after the approval process has been completed.

**Step 6:** If a department intends to provide a non-salary stipend for supplemental research expenses to the visiting scholar, a Stipend Addendum must be completed but only after the visiting scholar arrives at MSU.

The stipend should either be a one-time payment or monthly. An hourly or weekly stipend should not be offered. US citizen are responsible for their taxes. However, for non-resident aliens, MSU is required to withhold 30% federal income tax on payments unless there is a tax treaty that allows to withhold at a lower, or no rate. If a tax treaty is utilized, there are additional forms to collect. Submit with a new OVA Cover Sheet and Routing form and attach approved OVA.

Link to the Stipend Addendum form [Official Visitor Agreements \(OVA\) | Office of Research Compliance & Security \(msstate.edu\)](#)

Note:

OVA Addendum can be used to extend coverage of the OVA to the length of the extended stay. Start dates typically stay the same. However, sometimes visitors arrive later than expected. The department changes the start date on the OVA Addendum to a later, real date of arrival and changes the end date. OVA Addendum can be also used to extend coverage of the OVA for an extra period of time, typically one year. Submit with a new OVA Cover Sheet and Routing form and attach approved OVA.

Link to the OVA Addendum form: [Official Visitor Agreements \(OVA\) | Office of Research Compliance & Security \(msstate.edu\)](#)

For additional information, please visit International Institute's website:

<https://www.international.msstate.edu/offices/international-services-office/admitted-students/visiting-scholars/request/>