

Official Visitor Agreement (OVA) Process

Guidelines: How to Invite a Visiting Scholar

For links to forms visit <https://www.ors.msstate.edu/resources/>

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

A. Official Visitor Agreement

- 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 effective date is the day the process begins, not the first date of the visit.
- 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.”
- Beginning and ending dates need to match the dates on the DS-2019 request form (if requesting a J visa for international visiting scholars).
- Insert the correct name and proper title for all signature authorities. Signatures of visiting scholar/student and collaborating entity can be scanned, but not digital.
- Prior to being sent to the Office of Research Security (ORS), the OVA must be signed (page 6) by the authorized representative of the collaborating entity who is someone who can legally commit that entity. Insert the date when the signature was obtained.
- Insert “N/A” if a signature is not applicable.
- If the visitor is to a DAFVM unit, Dr. Moore’s signature must be obtained prior to being sent to ORS. Dr. Jordan’s signature will be obtained by ORS.
- All visitors must sign the acknowledgement at the bottom (page 6) of the agreement. The signature can be scanned but not digital.

Attachment A - Project Description (page 7 of OVA 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.
- Must match what is on the DS-2019 request form (for international visitors).

B. Contract Cover Sheet and Routing Form

This cover sheet must be completed and signed by the host faculty member, department head, and Dean or center or institute Director.

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.

C. Visitor's CV

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

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

D. DS-2019 Request Form

Link to form: <https://www.international.msu.edu/files/exchange-visitor.pdf>

Helpful tips:

- Do not leave any parts of the form blank. Insert "N/A" if needed.
- Make sure the visitors name on the form exactly matches 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.
- Language certification is included in section V of this form or provide 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 ORS. Signatures can be digital.
- Departmental Charge Form is part of the DS-2019 request form, and must be fully completed (print name, title, date, phone, email) and signed before being sent to ORS.

E. Copy of Visitor's Passport (and any dependents)

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

F. Funding Source

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

All attachments must be in English.

Step 2: Send the Visitor Packet to the appropriate office.

- For DAFVM units: Once the Visitor Packet is completed, please send all documents via campus mail to DAFVM (Mail Stop 9800) where the VP for Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine signature will be obtained for the Official Visitor Agreement. DAFVM then routes the Visitor Packet to ORS for processing.
- For All other units: Send the complete Visitor Packet to the Office of Research Security (ORS) – Mail Stop 9627 Attn: Veronika Jelinkova. ORS will obtain the signature of the VP of Research after review.

Step 3: ORS will coordinate with the Office of Research and Economic Development (ORED) and International Services Office (ISO) in support of issuance of DS-2019. After the Restricted Party Screening is completed and no negative results are received, appropriate MSU authority will sign the visitor agreement. Original DS-2019 request form will then be sent to the International Services Office.

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

Step 5: A letter of invitation may be extended to the visitor using the Visiting Scholar, Visiting Scientist or Visiting Executive letter template located at www.provost.msstate.edu/far/staff/letters/.

If the department intends to provide a stipend for living expenses or other expenses, a separate contract with a separate cover sheet must be processed through Accounts Payable prior to an offer being extended to the visitor.

For additional information, please visit ISO's website:

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