

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS & PROCEDURE OVERVIEW FOR VISITORS (OBSERVERS, TRAINEES & VISITING SCIENTISTS)

DEFINITIONS

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) welcomes visiting colleagues and students from across the United States and around the world for research and educational collaboration, observation, and study.

A **Visitor** is an individual who, though **uncompensated by UTHealth**, is given access to UTHealth property, facilities and/or information systems, at the discretion of UTHealth, for a specific period of time for collaborative or educational purposes. Visitors may not perform any patient care. Visitors are **not considered employees, and are not entitled to wages or benefits**. There are six categories of Visitors to UTHealth: Guest, Observer, Pre-Baccalaureate Trainee, Professional Trainee, Visiting Student Trainee, and Visiting Scientist.

A **Guest** is a Visitor who is at UTHealth **for a short term** (generally less than one week) and **for a specific event** (e.g., serving as a guest lecturer, delegation member, site visitor or similar) at the invitation of UTHealth. The intake and supervision of Guests is a school responsibility. Schools are not required to submit an application to the UTHealth administration for Guests. Guests may **not** be issued an access badge and must be escorted by UTHealth employees while on campus. The host department should inform the guest of possible exposure risks, protective measures, and personal responsibility for any costs of needed healthcare.

To apply for one of the following Visitor categories, the Applicant must identify a Faculty Sponsor at UTHealth. The Applicant and Faculty Sponsor must complete this Application and submit it to the UTHealth administration for review and approval:

An **Observer** is a Visitor who observes UTHealth operations for educational or training purposes that primarily benefit the Observer. The Observer may not provide clinical care and **may not** participate in or perform research, data collection or other hands-on activities. The duration of the observation period is limited to no more than **two months** in any one department/division. Observers may observe in up to three different divisions/departments, for a cap of six months in any five-year period. A non-refundable \$750.00 USD (\$775.00 if paid by wire transfer) application processing fee is required for foreign* Observers.

A **Pre-Baccalaureate Trainee** is a Visitor who is a high school or undergraduate student seeking hands-on training and experience in preparation for a health sciences education. Pre-Baccalaureate Trainees receive specific training in research, and health education, appropriate to their educational qualifications. Pre-Baccalaureate may not perform patient care but may observe clinical practices, conduct research, perform data collection, and participate in other hands-on activities. The duration of training is limited to no more than **four months** in any one division/department. Pre-Baccalaureate may train in up to three different divisions/departments, for a cap of twelve months in any five-year period.

A **Professional Trainee** is a Visitor who holds an undergraduate or higher degree and is seeking additional hands-on training. Professional Trainees receive specific training in research, and health education, appropriate to their educational qualifications. Professional Trainee may not perform patient care but may observe clinical practices, conduct research, perform data collection, and participate in other hands-on activities. The duration of training is limited to no more than **four months** in any one division/department. Professional Trainees may train in up to three different divisions/departments, for a cap of twelve months in any five-year period. A copy of the applicant's diploma (highest degree) must be submitted with the application. A non-refundable \$750.00 USD (\$775.00 if paid by wire transfer) application processing fee is required for foreign Professional Trainee.

* "Foreign nationals" in this document refers to individuals who are not U.S. citizens or U.S. permanent residents.

A **Visiting Student Trainee** is a Visitor who is enrolled in an undergraduate, graduate or professional degree program at another institution while seeking hands-on training at UTHealth, ***but who is not registered and enrolled in an official course at UTHealth.*** The training at UTHealth must fulfill an educational requirement of the program in which the visiting student trainee is enrolled. A Visiting Student Trainee may not perform patient care but may observe clinical practices, conduct research, perform data collection, and participate in other hands-on activities. A letter from the applicant's home institution confirming the applicant's enrollment, good standing and educational requirement must be submitted with the application. An Agreement may be required before the visit can begin. UTHealth will make this determination during the application review process and will advise if an agreement is required.

A **Visiting Scientist** is a Visitor who is employed and paid by another institution or entity and collaborates with UTHealth faculty and staff. The Visiting Scientist may not perform patient care but may observe clinical practices, conduct research, perform data collection, and participate in other hands-on activities. A letter from the applicant's home institution designating and detailing salary support must be submitted with the application. An Agreement may be required before the visit can begin. UTHealth will make this determination during the application review process and will advise if an agreement is required.

IMPORTANT NOTICE – New Application Fees for foreign Observers and foreign Professional Trainees:

- A processing fee of \$750.00 USD (\$775 if paid by wire transfer) per application will be required to all foreign Observer and foreign Professional Trainee.
- This fee is non-refundable and non-transferable.
- The fee must be paid with the application in order to process the application. It can be paid using a money order drawn on a U.S. bank and made payable to "UTHSC-H". Wire transfers can be made upon request; please contact the administrative coordinator for your Faculty Sponsor in order to receive the instructions. Applicants shall be responsible for payment of any wire transfer's fees.
- UTHealth schools and departments may charge separate fees to participate in their visitor programs; the sponsoring school/department will provide this information upon application.

In addition, please note:

- UTHealth conducts security background checks on all applicants.
- ***It is the responsibility of non-U.S. citizens/permanent residents to have a visa appropriate for the visitor category they are applying for.***
- Foreign nationals, who are not U.S. citizens or U.S. permanent residents, must **check-in with the UTHealth Office of International Affairs with all original immigration documents to obtain appropriate written clearance to begin appointment.**
- Minors (individuals under the age of 18) must submit additional paperwork to be considered, as described in UTHealth's policy on Minors in the Workplace (<http://www.uth.edu/hoop/policy.htm?id=1448176>). **Applicants must be at least 16 years old.**
- Approval of this application is at the discretion of the Executive Vice President for Academic and Research Affairs (EVPARA) of UTHealth. A Visitor in any of the above categories may not begin their visit at UTHealth unless and until the application is approved by the EVPARA and all intake processes are complete.
- Any Visitor participating in human subjects or animal research must complete the applicable UTHealth training certificates.
- It is mandatory that all applicants submit the appropriate UT Health Form(s) fully completed and signed (with supporting documentation as requested on the form(s), including English translations, if applicable).
- All applicants who will be in a clinical setting and/or with access to patient information/records shall read the "[HIPAA Overview and Information Safeguards](http://www.uth.edu/evpara/otvs/)" (www.uth.edu/evpara/otvs/).
- Application should be submitted no more than six (6) months prior the proposed dates.
- Applications and all required documentation must be submitted at least four (4) weeks before the start of the visit.
- ***This process does not apply to visiting students who are enrolled through the Registrar of UTHealth.***

WHY THIS APPLICATION PROCEDURE IS IMPORTANT

The purpose of the Application for Observer, Trainee and Visiting Scientist is twofold – 1) to collect information which allows UTHealth to evaluate the Applicant's suitability for the association and comply with applicable regulations; 2) to provide clarity regarding each party's rights and responsibilities. The application includes clauses that notify the Applicant about UTHealth and UT System policies and local, state, and federal laws which govern their visit to UTHealth. By signing the application, the Applicant agrees to abide by these policies. The application also advises Faculty Sponsors and their supervisors of their responsibilities to adequately monitor and oversee their Visitors' activities and ensure compliance with these policies, regulations, and laws. Such considerations include but are not limited to: the ownership and non-disclosure of intellectual property, completion of safety and/or research training, observance of HIPAA rules, the Arms Export Control Act, U.S. economic sanctions, federal immigration regulations, and the Fair Labor Standards Act.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE – GENERAL

An Applicant may not participate in UTHealth activities unless and until all approvals in the application procedure are obtained and all intake processes are completed, as detailed below.

Applications must be approved by the Executive Vice President for Academic and Research Affairs (EVPARA) and will not be considered for approval until they are complete. At any point in this process, the application may be denied. The Faculty Sponsor will be informed as soon as this decision is made. All parties should allow at least four weeks for the application approval process (which begins when the Faculty Sponsor submits a complete application – Step 5 and 6 in Application Procedure below). Please note, although the application approval process at UTHealth may be completed within four weeks, foreign nationals should allow additional time to accommodate visa processing.

Visitors may not perform patient care. Visitors are not considered employees, and are not entitled to wages or benefits. Visitors are not authorized to have business cards or to be issued property such as pagers, cell phones and laptop computers or any other privileges normally associated with being an employee such as reimbursement for travel to attend conferences.

Depending on the nature, scope, and duration of the visit, the Applicant and his/her home institution may be required to sign an additional agreement (e.g., a visiting scientist agreement or institutional affiliation agreement) with UTHealth before the visit begins. The Office of the EVPARA, Office of Global Health Initiatives, and the Office of Legal Affairs will determine when additional agreements are necessary.

The following individuals are not covered under this process:

- **Visiting Students who are enrolled in a UTHealth course or educational program through the Registrar.**
- Individuals paid by UTHealth for their work (e.g., employees, contractors, etc.)
- Individuals with faculty appointments at UTHealth
- Postdoctoral Fellows (Contact the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs at 713-500-6612 for application procedures.)
- Volunteers (defined as individuals who perform services at the university for charitable and civic purposes which augment the work of the faculty and staff but which are part-time, sporadic, non-essential and non-critical to the operations of the university and do not require special technical, research, or health care skills or abilities. Contact Human Resources at 713-500-3130 for application procedures.)

APPLICATION PROCEDURE - STEP BY STEP

Steps of the application procedure are: <http://www.uth.edu/evpara/otvs/>

1. **Applicant** identifies Faculty Sponsor.
2. **Faculty Sponsor** agrees to host Applicant, and provides the application form to the Applicant.
3. **Applicant** completes the *Application for Observer/Trainee/Visiting Scientist* and submits it to the Faculty Sponsor with supporting documents (copy of photo identification, résumé or CV, appropriate Health Form(s) with supporting health records, and background check consent form). Minors (individuals under the age of 18) must also submit additional paperwork to be considered, as described in UTHealth's policy on Minors in the Workplace (HOOP Policy 164). The Faculty Sponsor will provide this additional paperwork when applicable. If Applicant **will be in a clinical setting and/or have access to patient information/records**, he/she shall read the "[HIPAA Overview and Information Safeguards](http://www.uth.edu/evpara/otvs/)" (www.uth.edu/evpara/otvs/).

For foreign nationals: Applicant must submit the same documents as above, but for photo identification, must submit a copy of their passport identification page. If the foreign national Applicant is already in the United States, the Applicant must also submit a copy of the visa stamp, I-94, and any other documents already issued to the Applicant to facilitate entry to the United States. For foreign Observers and Professional Trainees: a non-refundable fee of \$750.00 USD (\$775.00 if paid by wire transfer) must also be included for each application and sent directly to the Office of Global Health Initiatives.

4. **Faculty Sponsor** completes the *Faculty Request for Observer/Trainee/Visiting Scientist*, plus the one-page *Trainee Plan* for Pre-Baccalaureate and Professional Trainee Applicants and the *Clearance Request for Minors in the Workplace* (for minors). The Faculty Sponsor then secures the approval of the Department Chair or Dean, in accordance with the school's policy.
5. **Faculty Sponsor** submits the application with the appropriate health form(s) to UT Health Clinical Services (EHCS) for review and health clearance. EHCS will contact the administrative person in the sponsored department if information about health is missing. Once the applicant is cleared, EHCS will send a Health Clearance email to the department; copy of that email must be included in the application.
6. **Faculty Sponsor** then submits the entire application (comprised of the *Application for Observer/Trainee/Visiting Scientist*, *Faculty Request for Observer/Trainee/Visiting Scientist*, all supporting documents, health clearance email and the non-refundable application processing fee if applicable) (note: at this point, the health forms are not to be submitted) to the Office of the EVP for Academic & Research Affairs "EVPARA" (applications for U.S. citizens and U.S. permanent resident) or to the Office of Global Health Initiatives "OGHI" (for non-U.S. applicants); delivery options can be obtained by calling 713-500-3533 or 713-500-3062.
7. The Office of EVPARA or OGHI forwards the application to **Human Resources** to initiate a background check. Upon successful completion of the background check, Human Resources signs off on the application and forwards it to the Office of the EVPARA (for a U.S. citizen or U.S. permanent resident) or to OGHI (for a foreign national).

8. **The Office of the EVPARA** reviews the applications of U.S. citizens and U.S. permanent residents. (If the application is incomplete, the Office of the EVPARA contacts the Faculty Sponsor.)

For foreign nationals: OGHl reviews the applications of foreign nationals (If the application is incomplete, OGHl contacts the Faculty Sponsor.)

9. The Office of the EVPARA determines whether a visiting agreement or institutional affiliation agreement will need to be signed between the Applicant, his/her Home Institution, and UTHealth. If an additional agreement is required the Office of the EVPARA and the Office of Legal Affairs draft the agreement and send it to the Faculty Sponsor for forwarding to the Applicant. (If no additional agreement is required, skip to Step 11).

For foreign nationals: OGHl determines whether a visiting agreement or institutional affiliation agreement will need to be signed between the Applicant, his/her Home Institution and UTHealth. If an additional agreement is required, OGHl and the Office of Legal Affairs draft the agreement and send it to the Faculty Sponsor for forwarding to the Applicant. If no additional agreement is required, OGHl approves the application and forwards it to Office of the EVPARA for final authorization – Step 11).

10. **Applicant and the Applicant’s Home Institution** sign any additional agreement and return it to the Faculty Sponsor, who forwards it to the Office of the EVPARA.

For foreign nationals: Applicant and Home Institution sign any additional agreement and return it to the Faculty Sponsor, who forwards it to OGHl. OGHl then approves the application and forwards it with the signed agreement to the Office of the EVPARA for final authorization.

11. **The EVPARA** reviews the application. If approved, the EVPARA signs the application and any additional agreement.

12. **The EVPARA** notifies the Faculty Sponsor of the application’s approval or denial, and sends a scanned copy of the fully approved application to the Faculty Sponsor and Human Resources. The Office of the EVPARA also sends a copy of any additional signed agreements to the Office of Legal Affairs.

For foreign nationals: The Office of the EVPARA sends the processed application to OGHl. OGHl notifies the Faculty Sponsor of the application’s approval or denial, and sends a scanned copy of the fully approved application to the Faculty Sponsor, Human Resources, and the Office of International Affairs. OGHl also sends a copy of any additional signed agreements to the Office of Legal Affairs.

13. **For foreign nationals: Office of International Affairs (OIA)** contacts approved Applicant (and copies Faculty Sponsor) to provide instructional advisory regarding visa options and requirements.

PREPARATION FOR VISIT

After the application is approved by the EVPARA, the following process applies:

1. The sponsoring **Department/School** sends an Acceptance Letter (following the approved template and detailing the authorized dates and scope of the visit) and a copy of the fully signed visiting agreement or affiliation agreement (if applicable) to the Applicant.
2. **Applicant** signs and returns the Acceptance Letter to the Department/School.
3.

For foreign nationals: Department/School sends a copy of the signed Acceptance Letter and other required documents, as applicable, to OIA. **OIA** assists Applicant with visa arrangements and keeps Faculty Sponsor informed of progress. **Applicant** schedules an appointment in advance with OIA for visa clearance upon his/her arrival at UTHealth.

INTAKE PROCESSES

1. **The Visitor checks in with Human Resources** (UCT 150, no appointment needed), who reviews the Visitor's identification, and takes a photo for the visitor's UTHealth badge.
2.

The foreign national Visitor checks in for his/her scheduled appointment with **OIA** (UCT 130), who reviews the Visitor's visa documents. If the visa is in order, OIA sends the OIA Clearance Form electronically to the Faculty Sponsor, Human Resources, and OGH. This form is the only acceptable confirmation that OIA has cleared the foreign national's visa status to start his/her visit at UTHealth. If the visa review is unsatisfactory, the start of the visit will be delayed until any issues are resolved. Once visa clearance is complete, the foreign national Visitor checks in with **Human Resources** (UCT 150, no appointment needed), who takes a photo for the visitor's badge.
3. After badge issuance, the visit may begin.

DURING THE VISIT/OBSERVERSHIP

1. The Visitor's activities must be limited to those approved in the application. Observers are permitted only to observe. Visiting Scientists and Trainees are permitted to do only what is outlined and approved in their individual applications. A Visitor who will be performing human subjects research or handling animals must complete required research training. A Visitor who may be exposed to potentially hazardous materials must complete required safety training. It is both the Visitor's and the Faculty Sponsor's responsibility to ensure that any such trainings are completed in a timely manner.
2. The Visitor's building access must be limited to what is absolutely necessary and what is approved in the application.
3. Upon completion of the visit, the Faculty Sponsor is responsible for ensuring that the Visitor's official end date is observed, collecting the Visitor's UTHealth badge, and returning it to Human Resources. It is recommended that each Department have an evaluation system in place to collect input from Visitors about their experiences at UTHealth.

RESOURCES

Contacts at UTHealth:

Human Resources Department (HR) PeopleAdmin entries, background checks, intake appointments, ID badges, minors in the workplace, volunteers	713-500-3140
Office of the Executive Vice President for Academic and Research Affairs (EVPARA) Application process/status for U.S. citizens/U.S. permanent residents http://www.uth.edu/evpara/otvs/	713-500-3062
Office of Global Health Initiatives (OGHI) Application process/status for foreign nationals http://www.uth.edu/global-health/observers/	713-500-3533
Office of International Affairs (OIA) Visa process/status for foreign nationals https://www.uth.edu/international-affairs/	713-500-3176
Office of Legal Affairs Export control issues, visiting scientist/affiliation agreements	713-500-3268
Office of Research Support Committees (ORSC) Training requirements, research protocols	713-500-7943
Privacy Office HIPAA Overview and Information Safeguards	713-500-3391
Safety, Health, Environment & Risk Management (SHERM) Safety training requirements, minors in the workplace	713-500-8100
UT Employee Health Clinical Services (EHCS) Health clearance	713-500-3254 fax: 713-486-0983

Web Links in Application:

Arms Export Control Act
http://www.pmdtc.state.gov/regulations_laws/aeca.html

BIODATA Information Request: J-1 Exchange Visitor sponsored by UTHealth
<http://www.uth.edu/international-affairs/exchange-visitors-j-1/>

Export Administration Regulations
<http://www.bis.doc.gov/>

Policy and Procedure Manual for the Confidentiality of Health Care Information
<https://inside.uth.edu/hipaa/policies.htm>

Training required for animal handling: Center for Laboratory Animal Medicine & Care
<https://inside.uth.edu/animal-research/clamc.htm>

Training required for human subjects research: CITI Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative <http://www.uth.edu/cphs/>

U.S. Economic Sanctions

<http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Pages/Programs.aspx>

UTHealth Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOOP)

<http://www.uth.edu/hoop/>

UTHealth, HOOP Policy 160 – Criminal Background Checks

<http://www.uth.edu/hoop/policy.htm?id=1448168>

UTHealth, HOOP Policy 164 - Minors in the Workplace

<http://www.uth.edu/hoop/policy.htm?id=1448176>

UTHealth, HOOP Policy 206 - Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information <http://www.uth.edu/hoop/policy.htm?id=1974558>

UTHealth Safety, Health, Environment & Risk Management's (SHERM)

<http://www.uth.edu/safety/index.htm>

UT System Rules and Regulations

<http://www.utsystem.edu/bor/rules.htm>