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|  | **Effective Date**  March 31, 2023 | | **Number**  L 16 | |
| **Subject**  Visiting Laboratory Researchers | | | | |
| **Reference**  UH, University of Virginia, Iowa State, A&M, Stanford Policies on Visiting Researchers or Scholars | | **Special Instructions**  None | | |
| **Distribution**  Laboratory Faculty and Staff | | **Reevaluation Date**  5 years | | **No. Pages**  4 |

# PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to define and clarify the process in which visiting researchers, faculty, or scholars will be allowed to enter, access, participate and/or conduct academic research at the University of Houston-Clear Lake (UHCL), under the direction of a lab Sponsor. UHCL is committed to providing rewarding academic and research experiences to persons who may be visiting the campus under a mentorship, research grant, or visiting scholar program for educational research experience purposes.

Hazardous materials, including but not limited to chemicals, radiation, biological agents, and physical hazards could be used or present in a laboratory. Locations such as mechanical rooms, shops, machine shops, materials testing, electrical rooms, equipment rooms and other areas with potential hazards should be taken into consideration as well.

Minors or students wishing to conduct laboratory work under the mentorship of a faculty or instructional sponsor are addressed separately so are not included in this document.

# SCOPE

Persons intending to visit any UHCL laboratory for more than one day, to participate in laboratory activities for academic or research experience must complete and submit the [Visiting Researcher Application](https://www.uhcl.edu/about/administrative-offices/environmental-health-safety/documents/l16-a-visiting-researchers-application.docx), meet the requirements specified here and in the application, comply with any hazard review feedback/recommendations, and receive approval (by EHS, the Lab Safety Committee or Program Chair, Department Chair, and Dean or designee) before they will be allowed to enter, observe, or participate in UHCL laboratory activities. This is to protect the Visiting Researcher and others at UHCL from injury arising due to potential exposure to harmful agents or hazardous conditions, as well as safeguard the University from liability or loss of physical and intellectual property, potential patents, rights to research findings, and research grants.

## DEFINITIONS

1. BBP – Blood Borne Pathogens, including those that can be transmitted by potential work exposure to human blood or bodily fluids or infectious substances.
2. EHS – UHCL Environmental Health and Safety department
3. IACUC – Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
4. IBC – Institutional Biosafety Committee
5. IRB – Institutional Review Board, within OSP, which handles Human Subjects review.
6. Laboratory – any UHCL area used or intended to be used for scientific analysis, advancement, learning, or technical activities which may involve chemicals, biological materials, geological or physical materials, hazardous materials or energy sources. This includes teaching and research, fieldwork.
7. OSP – Office of Sponsored Programs, which handles research grants
8. PPE – Personal Protective Equipment, such as lab coats, safety goggles for chemical splash protection, safety glasses for impact, and work gloves for grip, impact, cut or chemical protection.
9. RSC – Radiation Safety Committee
10. SDS – Safety Data Sheets, which are written by a manufacturer for each chemical material to relay important chemical safety and health hazards, and physical properties.
11. Sponsor - UHCL employee who is directly responsible for administering the program the Visiting Researcher is applying to participate in.
12. Visiting Researcher – Persons (18yrs+) not currently a student or employee of UHCL, that participates in a research activity in a UHCL laboratory.

## PROCEDURES

* 1. Applications must be completed by both the Sponsor and potential Visiting Researcher.
  2. Submit completed Visiting Researcher Application (with information on materials to be used for hazard review, experience, training, and plan), and Release and Indemnification Form to EHS for review of activities and recommendations.
  3. SDS may be attached and reviewed at this time, or subsequently with safety trainings.
  4. EHS will then send to the applicable Department Chair/ Dean with comments, for approval.
  5. Forward approved Application, along with completed [Person of Interest Form](https://www.uhcl.edu/human-resources/documents/forms/person-of-interest-poi-form.pdf) to the sponsoring department’s business administrator to submit to HR for the participant’s UHCL identification (PeopleSoft number, and subsequently email address by OIT).
  6. Arrange safety trainings with EHS for the Visiting Researcher after UHCL email is generated. Allow sufficient time so that all required institutional trainings by EHS, sponsoring department, etc. can be completed as required by the Visiting Researcher prior to engaging in laboratory activities.

Training includes general laboratory safety, policies (L01), potential chemical hazards, personal protective equipment (PPE) that is required, personal hygiene, cross-contamination, waste handling, emergency and first aid procedures, fire extinguisher use, etc. Check UHCL email for login instructions.

* 1. Arrange for (if needed), and ensure payment for medical surveillance and immunizations as required for the Visiting Researcher, such as when handling blood borne pathogens, animals, or isotopes.
  2. Return all approved documents to EHS, and notify when training is complete for verification and final approval for laboratory access and work to begin.
  3. Ensure that the Visiting Researcher is appropriately supervised at all times.
  4. Notify the Department Chair/College Dean and EHS if the nature or scope of the Visiting Researcher’s activities changes. This includes change in materials, equipment, chemicals, and scale up of activities.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Sponsors

* Activities must be conducted under an appropriate supervisory plan, included in the application package.
* Provide research topic specific training, such as videos, hands-on, procedures, resources, etc.
* Sponsors / designees have primary responsibility to supervise all lab activities and to restrict activities as necessary per the nature of the materials present in the lab.

1. Sponsoring Department is responsible for providing administrative support to the sponsor and visiting researcher to ensure that intended experiences are realized, in a safe manner.
2. Visiting researcher

* Provide information required on the Visiting Researcher Application, and Release and Indemnification Agreement Form in entirety, obtain necessary approvals and agree to work under the mentorship of the research project Sponsor.
* Adhere to rules and regulations, safety practices, requirements or restrictions imposed by EHS, the sponsoring department, and IACUC, IBC, IRB and RSC as applicable.
* Complete Safety Training(s) (advanced), and topic specific training.
* Carry health insurance
* Visiting Researchers are guests of the University and are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner, that will further their objectives without sacrifice to the safety of themselves or others.

Either the visiting researcher, sponsoring employee or department is responsible for providing adequate, appropriate PPE and equipment, safeguards, etc.

1. EHS

* Reviews Application and related forms, proposed research activities, and advises the Sponsor of recommendations from hazard review before the Visiting Researcher is notified of acceptance
* Recommends training(s) and provides such as available
* Reviews any change in scope and provides advice to the Sponsor
* May inspect the proposed laboratory at any time before or during research activity
* May suspend laboratory activities if deemed unsafe, safety deficiencies are not corrected, or if there are other violations from EHS or other institutional compliance stipulations

1. The IACUC, IBC, IRB and RSC or any other institutional compliance office or designee have the authority to oversee research in their areas of responsibility and to suspend activities when such action is deemed unsafe or inappropriate.

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Faculty are advised to consult the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) for any notification or approval requirements for the sponsor’s research work.

Host faculty department can send an invitation letter to the visiting scholar, detailing the beginning and end date, expected activities, and that they must abide by relevant university policies. Specifying what resources will / will not be provided can help prevent assumptions.

Relay any research funding organization requirements to the Visiting Researcher. If the Visiting Researcher is funded by another industry or organization, consider what their research terms are.

Materials and equipment visitors bring to the laboratory may need approval by the sponsoring department, EHS, and Facilities Management as well. Materials approved and brought are the property of and upkeep responsibility of the owner. UHCL cannot be liable for damage, misuse, or misplacement of personal property. Consider whether the materials will be or need to be shared.

There are federal laws on provision of services and export of controlled items and information. Check with the office that handles export controls if import or export activities apply.

Departments may want to have Visiting Researchers sign appropriate patent and copyright agreement(s). Visitors may already have an intellectual property agreement with their current employer as well. If that is the case, consider a joint owned agreement with the company, so that university resources and facilities are not used for the sole benefit of an outside organization.

Consider IRS and other restrictions concerning private use of facilities. Sign intellectual property agreement to avoid misunderstandings.

Refer to UHS, UHCL, or OIT policies on data management, protection of university information, protected educational and health information, etc. as applicable.

Consider if assessing a fee is appropriate to reimburse the sponsoring department or university for services, utilities, or time rendered.

In the event that a visiting research agreement is no longer mutually beneficial, the sponsoring faculty, department, or university may specify corrective measures needed, or provide reasonable notice for termination, unless activities warrant immediate termination.

## APPROVAL

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AVP Facilities Management & Construction

Date: March 31, 2023

1. **REVISION LOG**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Revision Number** | **Approval Date** | **Description of Changes** |
| 1 | 3/31/2023 | Document drafted |
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