Visiting Researchers/Scholars Registration Procedures
Office of Research Personnel

Definition of a VRS

Visiting Researcher and Visiting Scholar (VRS) refers to visitors who are not UGA employees or enrolled students and not contracted for services, but who are coming to UGA to observe or collaborate in research or to participate in activities that require access to UGA facilities, systems or services.

If a potential visitor meets any of the following criteria, they are considered a Visiting Researcher/Scholar or VRS:
- The visitor is physically coming to any UGA campus to observe or participate in research
- The visitor’s activities while on any UGA campus require access to UGA facilities, services or systems, therefore requiring a UGAID

For each VRS, the Faculty Sponsor should initiate the hosting procedures described below in the Visiting Researcher/Scholar Hosting Procedures section. If at any time an individual who is already on campus extends their stay, changes the nature of their work, or meets any of the criteria above, then they are a VRS and the Faculty Sponsor should initiate the VRS process if they have not already done so.

Who is NOT a Visiting Researcher/Scholar:
- Short-term visitors who are not participating in research and will not need access to UGA facilities and services.
- Persons that are not physically coming to visit a UGA campus.
- Individuals enrolled at UGA. If officially enrolled at UGA, then the individual will be brought onboard as a student.
- Individuals compensated or contracted by UGA or compensated for expected work or services performed. If he/she will be compensated by or through UGA Payroll for services rendered or he/she will be appointed to a UGA faculty or staff position, then the individual will be brought onboard as an employee.
- Individuals provided a stipend through UGA payroll.
- Adjunct faculty or others involved in formal instructional roles (support is offered by the Office of Faculty Affairs)
- Postdoctoral Research Scholars (support is offered by the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs)

If you need further clarification as to whether your visitor qualifies as a VRS, please take the VRS Test.
Why should I register my VRS?

Through the VRS registration, visiting researchers and scholars have access to necessary UGA resources, as well as identification through a UGAID and appropriate “standing” at UGA.

Visitors registered with the Visiting Researcher/Scholar program will be assigned a UGAID (81x number). They can then use this UGAID to access any necessary online training, request a MyID for other online UGA services, and acquire a UGACard to access services such as buses and building or lab access. Instructions on how to obtain a MyID and UGACard are included when the Office of Research transmits the assigned UGAID back to the Faculty Sponsor.

Registration through our office also helps ensure liability coverage and clarifies intellectual property agreements.

Registration Procedures

The visiting researcher/scholar registration and onboarding procedures are required to host a visiting researcher on the UGA campus. See “VRS Registration Procedures” on page 3 for a step-by-step guide.

Instructions for Extension of Visit for an Existing VRS

If a Faculty Sponsor has an existing VRS and wishes to extend the visit past the original visit end date or past the maximum visit duration for the VRS type, please send a request for extension with explanation/justification of the situation to vrs@uga.edu. The justification requirements can be found here.
VRS Registration Procedures

1. **VISIT DETAILS**: Visit details should first be agreed upon between the UGA faculty sponsor, the visitor, and the hosting UGA unit (via the unit head) before initiating the Office of Research VRS Hosting Procedures.

2. **COLLECT REQUIRED DOCUMENTS**: The faculty sponsor or staff proxy should obtain required documents from the visitor

   - Visitor Agreement: ALL VRS must sign a visitor agreement in order to be registered with the Office of Research VRS program. Other documents (travel approvals, funding letters from home institutions, etc) are not acceptable in lieu of a signed visitor agreement. You will choose one of the following options for the agreement:

     - **IF** the visitor is employed by, enrolled in, or associated with any university, company, or government organization, they should sign the Standard Visitor Agreement with Employer/Institution Signature.
     - **OR** if the visitor is not employed by, enrolled in, or associated with any university, company, or government organization, they should sign the Standard Visitor Agreement – No Employer/Institution.
     - **OR** if the visitor or visitor’s institution requests a custom agreement instead of the Standard Visitor Agreement, please contact Cheryl Junker (junkercl@uga.edu, 2-4216) in Innovation Gateway. The resulting signed custom visitor agreement should be uploaded when completing the VRS Questionnaire.

   - Citizenship-based Documents
     - **IF** the visitor is a US citizen, permanent resident of the United States, has a Social Security Number or a Canadian National ID, then a background investigation approval or waiver from HR is required. The sponsor must initiate a background investigation by requesting the visitor complete the UGA Human Resources Background Check Request Form. The completed form is submitted to HR to conduct the background investigation. (*Background checks are currently taking up to 4 weeks for approval, so please submit this to HR as soon as visit details are confirmed. We cannot proceed until the approval email has been forwarded to vrs@uga.edu by the hosting unit.)
     - **OR** if the visitor is a non-U.S. citizen/non-permanent resident, please obtain a scan of his/her passport. The passport is required to assign a UGAID to non-U.S. citizens/non-permanent residents.

3. **COMPLETE VRS QUESTIONNAIRE**: The faculty sponsor or staff proxy should complete VRS Questionnaire.
   - The online VRS Questionnaire requires information about the visitor and their visit details. Click here for a list of questions that appear on the questionnaire.
   - Save and return is not available, so have all information and required documents ready.
4. **FACULTY SPONSOR CERTIFICATION**: The faculty sponsor will be required to certify the information in the VRS Questionnaire by replying to the email received upon the questionnaire’s submission. Additionally, a copy of the questionnaire will be sent to the unit head via email with instructions on confirming approval of the visit and visitor.

5. **OFFICE OF RESEARCH REVIEW**: Office of Research staff will collect and review the questionnaire. If there are no questions or concerns regarding the questionnaire Office of Research will assign and send the visitor’s UGAID to the staff contact as soon as possible. *(Please note that visa sponsorship through UGA is a separate process through the Office of Global Engagement-Immigration Services. All visa questions should be directed to that office. iStart information can be found [here](#).)*

6. **VRS ONBOARDING PACKET**: Office of Research staff will create and send a VRS OnBoarding packet soon after the UGAID is assigned. It is the sponsoring unit’s responsibility to ensure the visitor completes the VRS OnBoarding module soon after they arrive on campus.

7. **REVIEW IMPORTANT VRS INFO**: The Faculty Sponsor and staff proxy should review the “Other Important VRS Information” section.