

## Terms and Conditions for Visiting Scholars and Faculty MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning

Thank you for your interest in coming to MIT as a Visiting Scholar in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning (DUSP). Please carefully review the following terms and conditions prior to beginning an application process.

The visiting scholar appointment is an unpaid academic appointment intended to permit established faculty/scholars from other universities/institutions to pursue independent research at MIT that is closely aligned with research interests in the host department. **It is not a faculty appointment at MIT, nor is a visiting scholar considered to be a student at MIT even if permission to audit subjects is granted.** (Students enrolled in degree programs at other universities are not eligible and must instead apply to the Institute as a Visiting Student). The appointment does not confer alumnus status.

An appointment as visiting scholar or faculty in DUSP is for a specified period, as agreed to in advance with a faculty sponsor; it most often corresponds to one or more academic terms (fall, spring, summer) and rarely exceeds twelve months in length. An appointment is dependent upon the ability of a DUSP faculty member to serve as faculty sponsor for the duration of the appointment. A visiting scholar must plan to accomplish his or her research agenda within the period of the appointment, as extensions are not normally granted.

The **application** consists of a letter addressed to a prospective **faculty member sponsor** (if one has been identified), or to the Head of the Department, outlining the field of study and what the scholar hopes to accomplish using MIT resources. Applicants are requested to be specific when describing their research agenda, how it fits into long-term goals, what resources at MIT they seek to access, and the period of their proposed stay. A current curriculum vita, two letters of reference from individuals familiar with the proposed work, and evidence of sufficient financial support must be included as part of the application. Written acceptance of these Terms and Conditions is required, designated by signing below. Offers of appointment to international visiting scholars are contingent upon their being eligible for and successfully obtaining an immigration status that permits the appointment (see *International Applicants* below for specific visa requirements for international candidates).

A current member of the Department must sponsor a visiting scholar. The role of the **faculty sponsor** is to introduce the visitor to colleagues and to the appropriate resources available at MIT, and more generally to act as a first point of contact. Please be aware that faculty sponsorship is voluntary and that faculty may decline to serve as sponsors because of their own commitments to the Institute.

If a faculty sponsor is identified and the Department approves the application, the prospective visiting scholar will receive an official letter of invitation and at the same time, for international visitors, the Department will initiate the visa application process (see *International Applicants* below for further information).

As a guest of the Department, a visiting scholar is welcome to meet with faculty and students. The Department offers access to Institute resources such as libraries and athletic facilities. The scholar is responsible for all fees and other costs associated with facilities use and privileges.

A visiting scholar may audit classes with prior permission of the instructor. However, the Department is under no obligation to supervise or approve the work performed by a visitor. No academic credit is awarded and no transcript is issued. Although visitors may occasionally offer a lecture or other presentation at the invitation of the Department, visiting scholars are not categorized as members of the faculty and may not teach subjects.

Due to space constraints, the Department makes no commitment to provide office space to visiting scholars. Visitors are always welcome to work in the libraries. Unfortunately, the Department does not have the resources to offer support services such as secretarial assistance, telephone, individual network drops or computers, parking, copying or fax service, etc. (Note: The entire MIT campus provides wireless access to the Internet.)

Visiting Scholars may be **funded** by a private organization, their government or university; no more than 10% of the funds can be from personal savings. Proof of support, including verification of funding (and bank statements if using personal funds) is required. **Housing** and the required **health insurance** are the responsibility of the visitor. For reference purposes, a single scholar is required to have a minimum of \$35,000 in annual funding **with a limit of 10% from personal savings**; an additional \$5,000 per year is required for each accompanying spouse/partner/child (no limit on personal savings for these costs). These funding minimums are exclusive of health insurance. All costs are subject to increases in subsequent academic years. Before an appointment as Visiting Scholar is considered valid, a Statement of Compliance must be signed to indicate that health insurance coverage meets the mandatory requirements.

The Department requires an **administrative fee of \$1500.00 per term** during the period of appointment, payable upon arrival. Please note there are three terms: Fall, Spring, and Summer. This is a fixed fee per term and is not prorated. The fee does not fund the research activities of the visitor or the faculty sponsor but is applied to the administrative costs associated with processing the application and the appointment, initiating a visa, and advising on related matters during a visitor's stay, as well as the cost of the wireless internet access and general IT support. The MIT identification card will be authorized upon payment of the administrative fee.

It is MIT policy that Visiting Scholars with appointments of six months or longer must report on their outside professional activities (OPA) to the department head. The OPA form and instructions are provided annually in May to individuals who must submit a report.

## ***International Applicants***

International applicants must meet MIT's requirements for visa sponsorship in order to be eligible for Visiting Scholar status. Minimum requirements for MIT sponsorship:

- There are no minimum years of experience required if the individual has a Ph.D. and will be teaching or conducting research at MIT.
- If the individual has a Master's degree (or degrees), a minimum of two years of post-degree, progressively responsible research or teaching experience with traditional scholarly achievements (publications, conference presentations, etc.) is required. Experience gained while a student is not counted unless the individual was a full-time employee while in the Master's program.
- If the individual has a Bachelor's degree, a minimum of five years of post-degree, progressively responsible research or teaching experience with traditional scholarly achievements (publications, conference presentations, etc.) is required. Experience gained while a student is not counted.

It is expected that a visiting scholar will have the resources and **language ability** to develop his or her research agenda. For international applicants the hosting faculty must provide proof of English language ability via the Verification of English Language Proficiency form issued by the International Scholars Office. Final approval is granted by the MIT International Scholars Office (ISchO) when it reviews the application for adherence to visa regulations. **Please do not contact the ISO directly. ISchO staff members will handle inquiries only through departmental liaisons.**

For most international visitors, MIT's ISchO recommends entering the U.S. on a J-1 Exchange **Visitor Visa** and will approve visa applications for MIT if it determines that a scholar meets the appropriate visa requirements and has sufficient financial resources to support himself or herself (and family, if any) for the duration of the appointment. A copy of the scholar's current passport and current visas must be submitted with the visa application form provided by the Department. Should an invitation be extended to come as a Visiting Scholar, the Department will assist with the initial visa application process. However, it is the responsibility of the visitor to allow sufficient time (a minimum of 75 days is required but not guaranteed, 8 to 12 weeks is recommended, occasionally longer depending upon country of citizenship and individual situations) to process a visa application. Given the large population of international students, faculty and visitors that the ISchO advises, MIT cannot guarantee a visa will be approved by a particular date. The effective dates of a Visiting Scholar's appointment may be affected by processing time beyond MIT's control. It is the Visiting Scholar's responsibility to make travel commitments accordingly. If a Visiting Scholar does not enter the United States on the appropriate visa, the appointment will not be considered valid.

**International visitors are required to register with the ISchO upon arrival and to participate in a helpful orientation session.** Additional information for international applicants can be found on the web at:  
<http://web.mit.edu/scholars/intlscholars/index.html>

Accepted (Signature required):

Date:

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**Checklist**

- Letter of intent addressed to prospective faculty host (or alternatively to Head, Department of Urban Studies and Planning)
- Brief description of research agenda
- Curriculum Vitae
- Two letters of reference
- Written acceptance of the Terms and Conditions for Visiting Scholars
- Evidence of financial support for period of visiting appointment
- Copy of current passport showing expiration date and any current visas
- For international visitors, evidence of language ability
- Administrative fee (if application is approved, payable upon arrival)

*Revised March 2024*