Visiting Researchers/Scholars
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 the following criteria, they are considered a Visiting Researcher/Scholar or VRS and the Faculty Sponsor should initiate the hosting procedures described below in the Visiting Researcher/Scholar Hosting Procedures section:

- The visitor is physically coming to any UGA campus.
- The visitor’s activities while being hosted by a UGA faculty member on any UGA campus include participating in or observing research.
- The visit is not part of an official UGA program and the visit is not intended for the visitor to perform contracted services for UGA.

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:

- Persons that are not physically coming to visit a UGA campus.
- Short-term visitors who are not participating in research and will not need access to UGA facilities and services.
- Program Participants. Individuals who participate in an authorized campus sponsored academic program for a defined period. Included in this category are individuals participating in grant sponsored programs, fellowships, research projects or programs, and internships.
- 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 or by UGA.
- 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 request a MyID for online UGA services and access any necessary online training 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.

### VRS Types and Associated Time Limits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VRS Type</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Time Limit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scholar in Residence</td>
<td>Visitors at the postdoctoral level or above who will be involved in temporary research or scholarship, independent or collaborative</td>
<td>Up to 24 months</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visiting Graduate Student</td>
<td>Visitors at the graduate student level who are not enrolled at UGA and who are temporarily involved in research or scholarship, independent or collaborative</td>
<td>Up to 24 months</td>
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<tr>
<td>Researcher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Interns</td>
<td>Visitors at the undergraduate level who are not enrolled at UGA</td>
<td>Up to 12 months</td>
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See the next page for additional VRS procedures and resources.
Registration Procedures

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

Reference: Appendix A

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 and in Appendix B.

Reference: Appendix B

Instructions for reactivating a returning VRS

If a faculty sponsor has a previous VRS returning to campus, the VRS’s access may be reinstated without submitting a new VRS Questionnaire if the eligibility criteria are met and a request is submitted via the Returning VRS Request Form.

Please see Appendix C for eligibility criteria and the link to the Returning VRS Request Form.

Reference: Appendix C
Appendix A: 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 Derek Eberhart (dereke@uga.edu) 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, then a background investigation approval 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 variable in approval turnaround time, so please submit this to HR as soon as visit details are confirmed.)

     □ 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.

   OR

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.
Appendix B: VRS Extension Request

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 must include:

1. Time-frame of extension

2. Source of support for the visiting researcher/scholar’s living expenses during the extension period. If the person will be leaving campus and collaborating remotely: Explain the nature of the remote access (from where the person will be accessing UGA systems, etc.). PLEASE NOTE: The VRS Program is not for remote collaborations, but access extensions for existing VRSs once they leave campus may be granted through this program for a limited time (usually no more than 6 months) to help facilitate certain needs.

3. List the facilities and/or UGA systems that the visitor will need to access (please be specific).

4. The activities of the visiting researcher/scholar during the extension period and

5. Will the visitor be involved in a research project that is externally funded through UGA (for example, working on the Faculty Sponsor’s research project that is funded by NSF).

6. Provide a brief statement of justification describing the value of the visit for both the host and visitor.

Should the extension be approved, Office of Research will request the visiting researcher/scholar’s UGAID be reactivated. **Note that an individual is considered a visiting researcher/scholar, and subject to the terms of his/her Visiting Researcher Agreement, throughout the full period of any extension, whether the VRS is working on a UGA campus or remotely through UGAID access.**
Appendix C: Returning VRS Request

INSTRUCTIONS FOR EXTENSION OF VISIT FOR AN EXISTING VRS

If a faculty sponsor has a previous VRS returning to campus, the VRS’s access may be reinstated without submitting a new VRS Questionnaire if the following eligibility criteria are met and a justification is submitted via this Returning VRS Request Form:

Eligibility:

• The returning visitor must still fit the definition of a VRS
• The scope of the returning visit must be the same as the previous visit
• The faculty sponsor must be the same as the previous visit
• Must be within 1 year of leaving the previous visit and must be within 3 years of completing the full VRS registration.
• The home institution/employer of the visitor must be the same as the initial/previous visit in which the visitor signed the Visitor Agreement.

The request form includes:

• VRS name and/or tracking number from initial visit
• VRS DOB, Gender listed on government issued document and, if applicable, passport number and country.
• Faculty Sponsor name
• New visit dates for the time they will be on campus
• Confirmation that the access needed is the same as the last visit (ex. Campus, building, labs, UGA systems requiring a MyID, etc)
• Confirm that the agreement terms, VRS’s home institution, and the scope of the returning visit are the same as the previous visit (ex. Is their role the same?)
• Confirm that the Faculty Sponsor/Hosting Unit has contacted the Office of Global Engagement-Immigration Services if applicable.

Additional Policy:

• Returning visits activated for a max of 12 months at a time.