

Code of Practice for Visiting Students

FINAL TEXT

Principles

1. The following principles have been agreed by Council and Conference of Colleges to guide the work of the Joint Supervisory Committee for Visiting Students ('the Supervisory Committee'):
 - i. Diversity of educational background is one of Oxford's strengths, and Visiting Students contribute diversity to student bodies in colleges¹ and in the wider University which enhances the educational experience they provide.
 - ii. The University, however, wishes to be assured that the proportion of Visiting Students relative to undergraduate matriculated students in student bodies, both in colleges which accept them and for the whole student body of the University, remains within specified limits.
 - iii. The academic experience of Visiting Students for the courses in which they study must broadly be equivalent to that provided for other undergraduate students on those courses. This applies, for example, to standards for admissions and the academic content of courses. Visiting Students must also be fully integrated in to the undergraduate community of their college.
2. The provisions of this Code of Practice ('the Code') are subject to change as agreed by Council and Conference of Colleges on the advice of the Supervisory Committee.

Definitions

3. Visiting Student programmes organised by colleges bring in high quality students from overseas institutions to work alongside Oxford's matriculated students. Most programmes last for a full academic year, although some are as short as a single term. Visiting Students are members of a college or other society, and, as such, are entitled under specific conditions to use of university libraries, to attend lectures, seminars and classes, and to work and receive teaching or supervision in university laboratories.² Visiting students are not, however, matriculated students. Nor are they eligible to be a candidates for any examination, or scholarship, or prize, or other award of the University.³ The college by which the Visiting Student is admitted is solely responsible within the University for oversight of their academic work, their accommodation and welfare.

Responsibilities of the Supervisory Committee

4. The Supervisory Committee is responsible to Council, through its Education Committee, and to the Conference of Colleges, for the implementation and operation of an agreed framework for Visiting Students within the collegiate University. This Code is part that framework.
5. The Supervisory Committee is responsible for monitoring the operation of Visiting Student programmes in relation to the Code and reporting its conclusions to Council and to Conference of Colleges.
6. In relation to its monitoring functions, taking into account the principles set out in paragraph 1, it shall:
 - i. examine the operation and conduct of Visiting Student programmes, satisfying itself that they are compliant with the requirements of the Code;
 - ii. explore with colleges, through discussions or otherwise, any issues giving cause for concern, and issuing further guidance and clarification as necessary;

¹ "College" also include Permanent Private Hall (PPH) unless otherwise indicated.

² Details are contained in *Examination Regulations 2012*, ch28, para 5 (p1099).

³ See *Examination Regulation 2012*, ch28, para 7 (p1099).

- iii. keep the Code under review, ensuring that it remains consistent with Oxford's academic standards and objectives.
7. In exercise of its reporting functions, the Supervisory Committee shall:
- i. collect information on a regular basis, from colleges and elsewhere, and report on its activities on regular basis to Council (through Education Committee) and to Conference;
 - ii. raise immediately in the appropriate quarter any issues of non-compliance with the Code which it believes require more urgent attention.

Numbers of Visiting Students

- 8. The numbers of Visiting Students in any college shall be set by Council, taking advice as appropriate from the Supervisory Committee, and also, in the case of Visiting Students in Permanent Private Halls (PPHs), from the PPH Supervisory Committee.
- 9. Except in cases identified in paragraph 25 below, no college or hall may admit an FTE of Visiting Students greater than 10 percent of its matriculated undergraduate student body. Any college or hall wishing to establish a new Visiting Student programme or significantly to expand an existing one must seek prior approval from the Supervisory Committee.
- 10. Admission of Visiting Students across the University will be coordinated by the Supervisory Committee so that the proportion of Visiting Students in all colleges does not in any year exceed 5 percent of the overall undergraduate population.

Admissions procedures

- 11. Visiting Students must gain admission to the University solely on the basis of academic merit, at a level and by a process which is so far as possible equivalent to that applying to matriculated students for the subject(s) concerned.
- 12. In particular the following conditions must be met by the admissions procedures of colleges for Visiting Students:
 - i. Successful applicants should normally offer a GPA score of not less than 3.7 or equivalent.
 - ii. Successful applicants are required to show proficiency in English by having an overall score of not less than 7.0 in IELTS (with at least 7.0 in each of the four components). (For other equivalents, see information on English Language requirements on the University's undergraduate admissions website.)
 - iii. Applications must be subjected to detailed academic scrutiny. Applicants may be given an academic interview, either in person or by remote means (phone or Skype), where this helps to decide among candidates ranked equally on paper, or where there are reservations about an otherwise strong candidate.
 - iv. Admissions procedures within the college must be overseen at a senior level in the college, and decisions to make offers must be signed off by a senior member of its academic staff.
- 13. Intermediary bodies, including other academic institutions and commercial agencies used by colleges to recruit students for Visiting Student programmes, are also expected to adhere to the terms of this Code. It is the responsibility of the college which uses the intermediary body to obtain specific assurance that they have done so, although one college may do so on behalf of others where the same agency is used by a number of different colleges.
- 14. Colleges must report to the Supervisory Committee any instances in which they have departed from these admissions procedures, including any irregularities which have come to light in the conduct of intermediary bodies.

Academic provision

- 15. Visiting Student programmes will normally last for a full academic year. Programmes may be as short as a single term, although in that case they must include a specific period of academic induction in addition to the full term of academic instruction.

16. Requirements related to academic provision for Visiting Students are as follows:

- i. Tutorials and classes may be arranged for Visiting Students by the college, in addition to lectures, seminars and classes available in the University. In all cases those who teach must have current or recent experience of teaching matriculated students, or be judged capable of providing teaching of comparable quality to that provided to matriculated students.
 - ii. In cases where the college wishes the Visiting Student to participate in a laboratory practical class or field trip, or in a class organised by a Faculty or Department, it must obtain the prior approval of that Faculty or Department for this arrangement before agreeing to its inclusion of the course of study.
 - iii. The college must nominate from among its academic staff a Director of Studies for Visiting Students, who is responsible for overseeing the academic quality of the programme, and ensuring that Visiting Students are integrated fully into the academic and social life of the college. The Director shall also be responsible for the students' pastoral welfare.
 - iv. The Director of Studies shall monitor the performance of each Visiting Student on a termly basis using the best available information to ensure that academic standards within the programme are being maintained.
 - v. The identity of the Nominated Director of Studies for Visiting Student programmes at the college must be reported annually to the Supervisory Committee. Nominated Directors should meet regularly to exchange information on good practice.
17. There should also be within the College or Hall a senior member of the academic staff to whom the Visiting Student can turn in the event that problems or disagreements arise with the Director of Studies for Visiting Students.

Integration of Visiting Students in the student body

18. Academic and social (including residential) arrangements for Visiting Students must be directed towards achieving a close integration of Visiting Students with the body of matriculated undergraduates in the college. This is likely to encompass such areas as induction, academic oversight, monitoring of performance and consideration of feedback from students. It is expected that Visiting Students will be accepted as full members of the college's Junior Common Room on an equal basis with matriculated students.
19. The Supervisory Committee will seek information from colleges as to the extent to which, and the areas in which, integration of Visiting Students is being successfully achieved.

Disciplinary issues

20. Visiting Students are not covered by the University's provision for discipline which apply to matriculated students, whether on academic or non-academic matters. In matters of discipline, colleges are responsible for taking such action as is required. Agreements made with universities from which Visiting Students come should take disciplinary issues into account, in order that there is clear responsibility for dealing with all disciplinary matters, whether under the dispensation of the University or that of the parent institution.
21. Only in relation to the use of University facilities, for example libraries and IT systems, which are accessed through the college are Visiting Students automatically subject to disciplinary rules of the University alongside matriculated students. It is the responsibility of the college to clarify to Visiting Students as part of their induction the rules which apply in this area, and to ensure that they accept the consequences of breaching them, including liability to pay any fines.

Monitoring

22. In order that the supervisory body can report to Council and Conference on compliance with the Code, each college taking Visiting Students is required to make a return annually to the Supervisory Committee. This may take the form determined by the Supervisory Committee. Information may be sought on such matters as numbers of visiting students admitted in the last academic year, academic programmes, admissions procedures, academic provision, integration of

Visiting Student with the body of matriculated undergraduate students, compliance by intermediary bodies, and other matters coming within the Supervisory Committee's Terms of Reference.

23. Staff involved with Visiting Student programmes and students in colleges may also periodically be invited to meet with members of the Supervisory Committee, and to make presentations and answer questions on the operation of their Visiting Student programmes. Quality assurance issues related to Visiting Student programmes in all colleges will be addressed in this way over a five to six year period,
24. The Supervisory Committee may also initiate more formal discussions with a college, where it has identified a particular cause for concern or the college has stated that it would find this useful.

Exceptions to the 10 per cent cap

25. When adopting the current policy as set out in paragraph 9 above, Council and Conference recognised that one college and two PPHs had exceeded over a period of years the limits on numbers of Visiting Students as a proportion of their matriculated undergraduate student body⁴. It has been agreed that these are to be recognised temporarily as "exceptions", in that they may for a period of years exceed the 10 percent limit on the number of Visiting Students as a proportion of matriculated undergraduate students, provided that: (a) they adopt to the satisfaction of the Supervisory Committee credible plans towards achieving full compliance within a specific number of years; and (b) they agree to provide on an annual basis detailed information enabling the Supervisory Committee to scrutinise progress towards achieving this aim.
26. The Supervisory Committee shall establish with the college and the two PPHs as soon as possible the appropriate plans with reporting and monitoring as necessary; and shall include within its annual report to Council and Conference an account of progress being made and the extent to which plans are being achieved.

⁴ Mansfield College, Regent's Park College and Wycliffe Hall.