

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

TO: Department Chairs

FROM: Sanjeev R. Kulkarni, Dean of the Faculty
Pablo G. DeBenedetti, Dean for Research

SUBJECT: Visitor Appointment Procedures

DATE: August 3, 2020

Dear colleagues,

We write with information about enhancements to the University's processes supporting appointments through the Office of the Dean of the Faculty for visiting ranks. Over the last number of months a group from the Office of the Dean for Research and the Office of the Dean of the Faculty, in consultation with the Office of the General Counsel, has met to examine and benchmark procedures associated with these appointments. While periodic review of procedures is good practice, this group was also convened because of heightened concern over inappropriate foreign influence in research.

Visitors are part of the fabric of our community, and visiting appointments are an important mechanism that helps the University achieve its mission. The opportunity to host colleagues from other institutions and organizations, domestic and international, in support of the University's research and teaching endeavors brings extraordinary benefits. Setting clear expectations and requirements for individuals in visiting appointments at the outset is also important. In continued support of these collaborations, while further mitigating risk to the University, the faculty and the visitors themselves, we are implementing additional steps to the appointment process. These include, 1) requiring visitors to sign an acknowledgement of risk and release form and an inventions agreement and 2) performing a screening of all visitors to ensure they are not associated with any debarred or restricted parties.

Risk and Release and Invention Agreement Forms

Many of our peers require visitors to their campuses to complete these kinds of forms already – in fact our offices are often asked to sign similar forms for our faculty who will hold visiting appointments at other institutions. These new forms contain terms similar to peers' forms, and are designed to provide clarity for all parties on requirements and expectations for the duration of the appointment, including rights to any intellectual property developed by the visitor while at Princeton.

Visual Compliance Screening

Visual Compliance is a software product that aggregates publicly available data on parties with whom it is illegal or restricted to transact activities. This data is compiled from many public sources, including federal government agencies and international organizations. The University is currently required by regulation to conduct screening of parties in areas such as sponsored research, procurement, technology licensing, and others. It will now screen visitors as a matter of course using this tool to identify parties that may require the University to take additional steps to comply with U.S. or international regulations. This process is different than a comprehensive background check in a number of ways. For example, it checks only publicly available lists and does not include checks of an individual's work history, education, criminal record, or other non-public information.

Members of our offices will work closely with your departments to implement these new elements of the standard appointment process, but at a summary level these should be straightforward to implement and should not create additional administrative burden for your department staff. We will now simply ask that all visitors complete the Risk and Release and Invention Agreement forms and return them to the appointing department to be included in the appointment paperwork, and when that paperwork has been submitted, staff in our offices will perform the Visual Compliance screening. Once these two items are in place and all other appointment requirements are fulfilled, the appointment can be approved.

We appreciate your partnership in this important initiative.