Guidelines for Mentors of Visiting Scholars

The Faculty of Divinity has a long tradition of hosting visiting scholars. Visiting scholars enrich the academic life of the Faculty, bring new perspectives, help forge academic links to their own institutions, and have the opportunity to use the world-class academic resources that Cambridge has to offer. The mentor plays an important role for visiting scholars by providing an academic contact within the Faculty who can ensure that the visiting scholar is integrated into the life of the Faculty. Typically, the mentor will work in the same academic area as the visiting scholar, though occasionally the mentor may be in a different academic area where there is a faculty member who already has an academic relationship or friendship with the visiting scholar.

Many of the practical aspects of the visiting scholar’s stay are handled by the faculty administrator who liaises with other parts of the administration in handling matters relating to visas, accommodation and access to university libraries.

The mentor’s role is to ensure that the visiting scholar is made aware of academic events taking place in their field and to ensure they integrate into the area during their stay. The role is, for the most part, informal and simply an expression of the long traditions of academic hospitality. As a result, there are no prescriptions as to what a mentor should do, but there are a number of things that mentors might do. These include, *inter alia*:

* Meeting the visiting scholar close to the beginning and end of their visit.
* Ensuring the visiting scholar is aware of seminars and other academic events happening in their area.
* Introducing the visiting scholar to colleagues and students at academic events.
* Inviting the visiting scholar to give a paper at a seminar or to host an informal conversation with colleagues or students.
* Informing the visiting scholar of some of the wider intellectual and cultural events in the university and town.
* Where the mentor has a college fellowship, taking the visiting scholar to lunch or dinner in college on occasion.

In light of the role that mentors are expected to have, it would not normally be considered appropriate for a faculty member on sabbatical to serve as mentor.

The Faculty does not envisage the mentor having a supervisory role, and consequently the mentor is not expected to read or review work written by the visiting scholar. Visiting scholars will be reminded that their mentor has various responsibilities within the faculty, their college and the wider university and consequently the time they are able to make available for a visiting scholar is constrained, especially during term time. The mentor will often be an informal point of contact for the visiting scholar and should be willing to answer reasonable questions that a visiting scholar might have. Queries on any matters related to employment, visas, or other technical matters should be directed to the faculty administrator.

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