

Sir Percy Spender Visiting Fellowship - Terms and Conditions

The Sir Percy Spender Visiting Fellowship was developed to recognise professors with an established record and international standing who wish to make a genuine contribution to the research environment at Sydney Law School. The Visiting Fellowships scheme aims to contribute to the Law School's mission to be a vibrant, diverse, and innovative community of legal scholarship.

Recipients of the Sir Percy Spender Visiting Fellowship will each receive funding of \$6000 AUD as a contribution towards their travel and accommodation expenses.

The following document sets out the terms and conditions for this award.

Applications must be submitted via the [online application form](#) for the Sir Percy Spender Visiting Fellowship on the Sydney Law School [visiting fellowships webpage](#).

Please contact law.research@sydney.edu.au if you have any questions.

Key dates

Tuesday 1 July 2025

Applications open.

Friday 5 September 2025

Deadline for applicants to contact a potential academic host.

Monday 22 September 2025, 11.59 pm (AEST, Sydney time)

- Applications close.
- Deadline for academic hosts to complete their confidential referee report.

Late October 2025

Visiting Fellows announced.

March - November 2026

Visiting Fellows visit Sydney Law School during this period.

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Eligibility

The Sir Percy Spender Visiting Fellowship is open to professors with an established record and international standing in law and legal studies, criminology, or other related areas.

Applicants must be:

- A tenured, full professor (i.e. the [highest academic rank within a university](#)). Assistant and Associate Professors are encouraged to apply for the George Flannery Visiting Fellowship.
- Employed full-time by a university, institute, or similar organisation that is based outside of Australia. Adjunct and honorary professors are not eligible to apply.
- Available to visit the University of Sydney between March - November 2026.
- Seeking to spend a substantive period of time at Sydney Law School (nominally, 2 weeks, but a longer visit may also be possible).

Selection criteria

Visiting Fellows will ideally contribute to Sydney Law School's mission *"to be a vibrant, diverse and innovative community of legal scholarship, recognised globally for our excellence; training tomorrow's leaders and addressing societal challenges through law reform and justice."*

Fellows are expected to make a genuine contribution to the research environment at Sydney Law School. Applications will be reviewed by a selection panel comprised of Sydney Law School academics and the Associate Dean, Research. The following selection criteria will be considered:

- The applicant's research track record and standing including publications, grants, engagement, and research impact (relative to opportunity);
- The quality of the applicant's proposal document, including whether the applicant's research interests align with the Law School's research areas and strategic priorities;
- The extent to which the applicant has developed a clear research agenda for their proposed visit including why Sydney Law School is an appropriate venue to host their visit;
- The applicant's willingness and ability to engage with Sydney Law School's research community and share their expertise with staff and students e.g. workshops, seminars, panel discussions, or other knowledge exchange;
- The applicant's willingness to provide research mentoring based on their subject matter expertise or broader skill set as a researcher/legal professional;
- The applicant's potential to collaborate with Sydney Law School staff e.g. co-authoring publications, or collaborating on research projects, workshops, or grant applications;
- The potential for the applicant to contribute to the activities and initiatives of the Law School's Research Centres and Institutes (if relevant); and
- Feedback provided by the applicant's academic host in their confidential referee report.

Academic host

Applicants must secure the support of a current Sydney Law School academic staff member to host their proposed visit. The academic host should have similar or complementary research interests to those of the applicant. University affiliates (including honorary, adjunct, and emeritus professors) are not eligible to sponsor international visitors and cannot be nominated as your primary academic host.

How to identify relevant Law School staff

Applicants who do not have an existing connection to Sydney Law School can:

- [Refer to the list of academic staff](#); and
- [Search for academic staff](#) with specific research interests e.g. environmental law.

Contact a potential academic host

When contacting a potential academic host, please provide:

- A copy of your CV and list of publications;
- A brief explanation of why you'd like to apply for the Sir Percy Spender Visiting Fellowship and the activities you'd like to undertake; and
- The proposed dates for your visit (to ensure the host is available for that time period).

Sydney Law School staff are likely to receive multiple enquiries and may not be able to accommodate every request to act as an academic host. In addition, the Spender Fellowships are competitive and not all applicants will be successful.

Proposal

If you secure the support of an academic host, you will be required to draft a proposal document (maximum 2 pages) outlining the purpose of your proposed visit. Further details are provided on the following page. Applicants must agree to a program of work with their academic host before completing their application.

The role of an academic host

Statement of support

Applicants are required to include a statement of support from their academic host in their visitor application using the [statement of support template](#) (doc, 46KB).

Confidential referee report

Academic hosts are required to complete a [confidential referee report](#) by Monday 22 September 2025.

Other responsibilities

If an applicant is awarded a Sir Percy Spender Visiting Fellowship, their academic host will:

- Develop a two-page visiting academic program with the Visiting Fellow (if a 408-research visa is required).
- Meet with the Visiting Fellow on their first day and introduce them to their colleagues.
- Facilitate the Visiting Fellow's participation in relevant School activities.
- Liaise with the Law School's Events team to organise specific events outlined in the Visiting Fellow's application.
- Chair events outlined in the Visiting Fellow's application (where appropriate).

Proposal document

Applicants are required to draft a proposal outlining the purpose of their visit (maximum 2 pages).

The proposal should include (where relevant):

- Details of the research project or research related activities the applicant would like to undertake during their visit;
- The contribution the applicant intends to make to Sydney Law School (e.g. a Research Centre/Institute seminar, guest lecture, Sydney University Law Society (SULS) event, workshop for PhD students, or mentoring, etc.). Your academic host can provide advice on the most appropriate outlet to share your expertise with staff and students.
- Opportunities for potential collaboration with Sydney Law School staff e.g. co-authoring publications, or collaborating on research projects, workshops, or grant applications; and
- The proposed benefits and outcomes of the visit.

The proposal must be reviewed and supported by the applicant's academic host prior to submission.

How to apply

You will need to complete the [online application form](#) for the Sir Percy Spender Visiting Fellowship on the Sydney Law School [visiting fellowships webpage](#).

Applicants are required to upload:

- A brief CV (maximum 4 pages) that includes details of their employment, qualifications, and publications.
- A statement of support from the applicant's Sydney Law School academic host using the [provided template \(doc, 46KB\)](#).
- A proposal (maximum 2 pages) outlining the purpose of their visit (see the 'proposal document' section above for further details).

If your CV and publications list are in separate files, please combine them into a single document.

Elizabeth Evatt Distinguished Fellowship

Particularly meritorious Spender applications will be considered for the Elizabeth Evatt Distinguished Fellowship. This Fellowship was developed to recognise world leading professors who will make a significant contribution to the research environment at Sydney Law School.

Elizabeth Evatt Distinguished Fellows may be invited to:

- Present their research at a seminar or discussion group;
- Participate in an event with coursework or PhD students;
- Mentor academic staff; or
- Present at a public event.

There is no separate application process for this Fellowship. To be considered for an Elizabeth Evatt Distinguished Fellowship, applicants must apply for a Spender Fellowship. Elizabeth Evatt Distinguished Fellows will be appointed by invitation from the Dean on the recommendation of the Law School's Research Committee.

Requirements and conditions

If the application is successful, the Visiting Fellow's employer would be expected to approve their research visit to Australia and their entering into an affiliation with The University of Sydney for the duration of their visit.

The conditions of the Sir Percy Spender Visiting Fellowship award are:

1. The Fellow is expected to (a) conduct research on their identified research project (if applicable); (b) present their research in a seminar, lecture, or workshop; (c) participate in an additional event with undergraduate, postgraduate, or higher degree by research (HDR) students; and (d) explore the potential for collaborations with researchers at the University of Sydney Law School.
2. The Fellow and their project may be profiled on the University of Sydney Law School website.
3. It is the Fellow's responsibility to ensure they hold a valid visa required for entry into Australia that allows them to engage in all the activities they wish to undertake.
4. It is the Fellow's responsibility to ensure they have appropriate travel and health insurance for their visit.
5. The Visiting Fellowship payment will be deposited into the recipient's nominated bank account following their arrival at the University of Sydney. The payment must be taken up during the 2026 calendar year and cannot be deferred to future years. If the visit is unable to proceed in 2026, the Fellowship award must be forfeited to allow for the reallocation of funds.
6. The Fellow is required to submit a brief report (approximately 1 page) outlining the research and related activities undertaken during their visit. The report should be submitted within two months of completing the Fellowship. Extracts from the report may be published on the Law School website and included in Law School Centre annual reports and promotional material.
7. All publications and outputs resulting from sponsored activities should appropriately acknowledge The University of Sydney. Copies of such publications would be welcome (where feasible).

Duration of visit

The length of the Fellowship is flexible depending on the Visiting Fellow's research priorities, external funding sources, and the availability of their Sydney Law School academic host.

Visiting Fellows are expected to visit the University of Sydney Law School for a period of 2 weeks, but visits may be up to 3 months. Longer visits up to 6 months may be considered in exceptional cases.

Visiting Fellows are encouraged to visit during the Australian academic year (March – November) to ensure there are greater opportunities to engage with Sydney Law School staff and students.

Visits outside of this period will be considered as exceptional, and must be justified based on the applicant's proposed activities and the availability of the applicant's academic host.

It is not possible for the Law School to support visits during the University of Sydney's seasonal break which generally occurs during the last two weeks of December and the first two weeks of January.

Funding

Recipients of the Sir Percy Spender Visiting Fellowship will receive a payment of \$6000 AUD which can be used towards the Fellow's travel and accommodation expenses while in Sydney.

The funding awarded through this Fellowship should be considered a partial contribution towards the visit and may not cover all expenses. As part of the visa process, applicants will need to confirm they have other resources to financially support their visit.

It is expected the Fellow will visit the University of Sydney Law School for a period of 2 weeks or longer to be eligible to receive the Visiting Fellowship payment.

The Visiting Fellowship payment will be deposited into the recipient's nominated bank account following their arrival at the University of Sydney. The payment must be taken up during the 2026 calendar year and cannot be deferred to future years.

Visa

Visiting Fellows are responsible for ensuring they hold a valid visa for entry into Australia that will allow them to engage in all the activities they wish to undertake during their stay.

The University's Immigration and Global Mobility (I&GM) team will recommend the most suitable visa for each Visiting Fellow based on the nature and duration of their visit. They will also provide Visiting Fellows with an invitation letter and instructions on how to lodge their visa application.

The I&GM team advises that tourist and visitor visas (e.g. 600, 601, and 651) aren't suitable for the recipient of a Visiting Fellowship payment or for visitors who plan to undertake or collaborate on research. Visiting Fellows will typically require a [408 Temporary Activity - Research Activities visa](#) or [400 Temporary Work \(Short Stay Specialist\) visa](#).

As some visas can take up to several months to be approved, it's important for applicants to consider visa processing times when planning the dates for their proposed visit.

Additional support / facilities

As an affiliate of the University of Sydney, Visiting Fellows will have access to the following resources for the duration of their visit:

- Access to the University's Wi-Fi network, intranet, and other University systems.
- Access to the Library's online databases and print collections.
- An affiliate card that provides access to:
 - Sydney Law School buildings;
 - Multifunction devices for printing and photocopying; and
 - Multiple libraries on campus.

Visiting Fellows will be provided with a shared office space and access to a desktop computer (if required). Visiting Fellows are also strongly encouraged to attend Law School events and functions, and to involve themselves in the life of the Law School in general.

Who was Sir Percy Spender?

The Sir Percy Spender Visiting Fellowship is named after Sir Percy Claude Spender KCVO KBE QC (1897-1985). Spender won Sydney Law School's University Medal for Law in 1922 and was appointed to King's Counsel in 1935. Spender acted as Treasurer under the Menzies Government and later served as the Minister for External Affairs, playing a critical role in securing the ANZUS Pact and Treaty of San Francisco. Spender went on to serve as Ambassador to the United States (1951-8) and President of the International Court of Justice (1964-7). Further details on Sir Percy Spender's life and career can be accessed via the [Australian Dictionary of Biography](#).

Questions

If you have any questions or require further information about the Sir Percy Spender Visiting Fellowship, please contact law.research@sydney.edu.au