

## **HARVARD UNIVERSITY**

### **Protocol and Guidelines**

#### ***Inviting Heads of State, Foreign Dignitaries, and Other High-Profile Visitors to Harvard University***

Harvard University regularly hosts distinguished visitors of many different nationalities, backgrounds, and beliefs. In doing so, the University encourages intellectual and educational enrichment while also honoring the principles of free speech and open inquiry that are appropriate and essential to an institution of higher learning.

Many visitors to the University may be invited directly by Schools, departments, student groups, and other academic and administrative units. However, the University Marshal's Office should be the first point of contact for any School, department, center, institute, program, or organization that would like to issue an invitation to a dignitary<sup>1</sup>. The Marshal's Office provides advice and assistance on matters of protocol and appropriate procedures for issuing such invitations. It is critical that all faculty and administrators inform the Marshal's Office of plans to invite dignitaries so that Harvard can avoid conflicting invitations.

All members of the Harvard community who are considering extending high-level invitations to speaking engagements on campus should keep in mind the following guidelines:

- Prior consultation with the Marshal's Office is required for invitations to incumbent heads of state or government, which must be extended in writing, directly by the President of Harvard. The Marshal must review and approve such invitations in advance, and once approved will liaise with the President's Office on drafting and sending the invitation.
- Any invitation to a head of state or other high-level dignitary to give a public address at Harvard should include explicit reference to the university's expectation that he or she take questions from the audience following his or her address. Typically, a Harvard faculty member will moderate.
- Secret Service protection is mandatory for any foreign head of state or government while on U.S. soil. Many other categories of dignitaries also require similar levels of security coverage for travel in the U.S. Any associated security costs, which can be considerable, are to be borne by the event sponsor(s).
- Additional terms and conditions may apply for those other than heads of state, so it is always advisable to consult with the Marshal's Office in advance on invitations to dignitaries or high-level officials, both foreign and domestic. For example, an invitation to individual(s) actively campaigning for public office at the time of the proposed event would require additional discussion, as would an invitation to an individual who is under investigation or indictment for criminal activities.

Student organizations seeking to invite high-level dignitaries to conferences or speaking engagements should also take the following into account prior to issuing such invitations:

- The Marshal's Office expects that students will have first obtained permission and support from a senior faculty member or senior administrator associated with the

- organization (such as the faculty director or executive director of a center or institute), and with the School or department where the event will take place. This is especially important for potential invitations to heads of state or government, which will NOT be approved for events solely run by students without the demonstrated support of a center, department, Dean's office, or other administrative unit of the university.
- The Marshal's Office reserves the right to seek additional information and assurances about the details of the student-run conference or event before approving invitations. Students should be prepared to show that:
    - there is a realistic expectation that the dignitary may accept the invitation based on the scope/theme of the conference or speaking engagement;
    - the organization is equipped with the resources to host the dignitary at an appropriate level (able to cover security costs, provide an appropriate venue and moderator for Q&A, would be available for diplomatic advance visits, has a clear messaging strategy that is consistent with the university's, etc.);
    - there is a compelling reason for Harvard to serve as the host venue for the event, and that the dignitary's appearance would meet the university's goals for encouraging intellectual enrichment while honoring the principles of free speech;
    - There is a faculty member or administrator who has indicated that he/she will take oversight responsibility for the speaking event.

The Marshal's Office can also advise on other matters of protocol, including proper forms of address, customs, gift exchanges, document signings, speaking formats, and Q&A requirements.

*These guidelines have been developed by the University Marshal's Office in consultation with:*

*The Weatherhead Center for International Affairs  
The David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies  
The Harvard Kennedy School of Government  
The Harvard Graduate School of Education  
The Office of the Vice Provost for International Affairs*

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<sup>i</sup> Who does the Marshal's Office consider to be a dignitary? The rule of reason should always apply, but there are two critical aspects that the Marshal's Office asks about when reviewing proposed invitations: will there be any extra security needs associated with the visit, and would the visit be likely to draw press/media attention? In addition to heads of state, this often includes former heads of state (US and foreign), Ambassadors, Senators, Cabinet-level Ministers, royalty, and also household name celebrities. When in doubt, the Office encourages faculty, staff and students to just ask!