Visiting Student Programs at Caltech

Caltech offers non-Caltech graduate students the opportunity to study and conduct research at Caltech while enrolled in or on sabbatical from another college or university. These student visitors must have the sponsorship of a Caltech faculty member and application must be made through the Graduate Studies Office at least one month in advance of the proposed visit. Student visitors include both students that are taking classes and those that are working as researchers or within a faculty member's research group.

Visiting Student Classifications

Visiting Special Student - These are visiting students who are in a current graduate degree program elsewhere and require proof of enrollment at Caltech, and/or who will be paid a stipend through the Caltech payroll system. Special students are eligible for Caltech benefits as defined by their enrollment status (i.e., housing, health and dental insurance, etc.). Special Students who receive a stipend will be billed for tuition and fees and tuition remission will apply for any student paid on a grant. Special students who do not receive a Caltech stipend will be billed the minimum tuition and fees rate (rates vary each year, but are the equivalent to three units of tuition). Special student appointments are allowed for one year, renewable each year up to a maximum of three years.

Visiting Student Researcher - A Visiting Student Researcher (VSR) is not eligible to receive academic credit, cannot be paid a stipend, and does not have an official "academic" standing at Caltech. They must provide proof of insurance for the duration of the visit, since they are not eligible for Caltech health and dental benefits. VSR's may be reimbursed for research-related expenses only (i.e., travel, equipment, etc.), but will not be eligible to receive a stipend through payroll. This status is limited to short-term visits of one year or less, with no extensions.

Other Student Programs

Exchange Programs - Some academic options and divisions have exchange programs that they have arranged with other institutions. The exchange students must have a visiting student appointment and the type of appointment will depend on the agreement negotiated for that exchange program. These programs are administered by the academic option or division.
**Education Programs** - Some academic options have special arrangements to provide educational opportunities for students at local institutions to study at Caltech. The visiting student arrangements have to be approved by the Option Representative or Program Officer in addition to the Graduate Studies Office.

**JPL/Caltech Staff Education** - Employees of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) and Caltech can take courses for credit, which can be transferred to another college or university. Courses taken under the staff education program cannot be used towards a Caltech degree. The application form can be downloaded [here](#).

**Other Visitor Appointments**

- Visitors who hold advanced degrees are not eligible for the student category. These appointments are handled through the Academic Division and Human Resources.
- Postdoctoral visitor appointments are handled through the Academic Division and Postdoctoral Scholars Office.
- Undergraduate students visiting for a summer research program (SURF, MURF, LIGO, Amgen...) are handled through Student Faculty Programs. All other undergraduate visiting requests are handled through the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Students.
- Volunteers or visitors. These are unpaid appointments, but for liability purposes all visitors should be registered with the Institute. These are handled through the Academic Divisions.

**CCE Procedure for Visiting Student Appointments**

A Visiting Student Application (see below) and documentation are required for all categories of visiting graduate student. Faculty or their administrative staff must request appointments through the Graduate Studies Office and supply documentation for all student visitors. International student visitors will be contacted by International Student Program after the official invitation from the Dean has been issued. All subsequent requests for extension must also be directed to the Graduate Studies Office. To apply, please follow these steps:

**Step 1:**

Research group completes **Visiting Student Request Form and collects required documents:**

- Host research group must provide proof of sponsorship from a Caltech faculty member in the form of a letter that includes the following information:
  1. Nature of work
  2. Financial arrangements (if any)
  3. Length of stay (including start and end dates)

List of additional documents to obtain:

- ☐ Proof of health insurance for the duration of the visit
- ☐ Proof of enrollment as a student in the form of the following:
  - Copies of transcripts and/or
- Certification of student from home institution
  - Evidence of financial support if no funding is being received from Caltech or if funding is less than the minimum amount required for living expenses per month. The minimum rate for academic year 2014-15 $1,853*
  - Curriculum Vitae (Chemical Engineering only)
  - Letters of reference (Chemical Engineering only)

*This is the minimum amount deemed feasible for living expenses (meals and lodging) and does not reflect tuition, fees, or other educational expenses. Depending upon an individual's circumstances, additional income for living expenses may be needed.

- Visiting Student Request Form must be signed by the option representative from Chemical Engineering, Chemistry, or Biochemistry and Biomolecular Physics.

- Visiting Student Request Form requires the signature of the Business Operations Manager

- The form and accompanying documentation must be given to Margaret Collins in the Division Personnel Office

**Step 2:**

- The Division Personnel Office will submit the Visiting Student Request form to the Graduate Studies Office at least one month prior to the visit start date. Additional time is required for international students who may need to apply for a visa.
- The Graduate Studies Office will review and send an official invitation letter from the Dean when the request form and all supporting documents are in order.
- The Division Personnel Office will maintain records of the Visiting Student Request notify the host research group, Option Representative and Division Receptionist once the request has been approved.
- The Division Personnel Office will maintain a manual list of all Student Visitors.

**Step 3:**

- After the official invitation has been sent by the Graduate Studies Office, visiting students will be contacted by the Registrar's Office to complete two additional forms:
  1. Patent Agreement
  2. Pre-Registration

- If campus housing is being requested, the student may now contact the Housing Office to apply. Please note that a University Identification Number (UID) will be issued by the Registrar's Office only after completion of Step 2 above. The UID is required in order to apply for housing.