

Guidelines for VSP Application: Observer

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth Houston) welcomes visiting colleagues from across the United States and around the world for observation and educational experiences.

Purpose:

The Observer's experience though **uncompensated by UTHealth Houston, is strictly limited to only shadow, watch, and listen.** Observers cannot provide clinical care, cannot perform any patient care, cannot have any type of direct patient contact (i.e., taking patient history, etc.), cannot participate in or perform research, data collection, or other hands-on activities.

Eligibility:

- Individuals who hold a high school or higher degree with an interest in a healthcare-related field and are seeking to observe UTHealth Houston operations for educational purposes and/or professional development, for their own benefit.
- Proficiency in English is required for all Observers. Observers are expected to speak, read, and understand English in an academic environment.
- Applicants must be at least 18 years old on the start date.

Duration:

Limited to two months per department/division; up to three different departments/divisions for a cap of six months in any five-year period.

Fee (per application): Application processing fee is non-refundable and non-transferable.

- A processing fee of \$100.00 USD is required for all domestic* Observers
**Domestic: in this document refers to individuals who are U.S. citizens or U.S. permanent residents.*
- A processing fee of \$775.00 USD is required for all foreign** Observers
***Foreign: in this document refers to individuals who are not U.S. citizens or U.S. permanent residents.*

Application Process:

To apply as an Observer, the Applicant must first identify a Faculty Sponsor at the university who agrees to host them. Once the Faculty Sponsor's department coordinator initiates the application in the VSP system, the applicant will receive a unique link to their online application. The applicant must complete all required fields, upload necessary documents, pay the VSP application processing fee, and submit the application. The application will then be forwarded to the department for completion. After the departmental and school approvals, the application will be sent to the VSP Office for review and processing, which can take several weeks. Applications must be approved by the VSP/Office of the Senior Vice President of Academic and Faculty Affairs (SVPAFA), and all clearances, as well as onboarding processes, must be completed for applicants to start their observership. The applicant will receive an email from the VSP once the application is approved. All parties should allow at least twelve weeks for processing the application, starting from when the VSP Office receives the application after departmental and school approval. Foreign nationals should allow additional time for visa clearance. The application may be denied/canceled at any point.

Please note:

- It is recommended that applicants don't finalize any travel plans until they receive the approval email from the VSP.
- An Observer may not begin their visit at UTHealth Houston until receiving the approval email from the VSP and all onboarding processes are complete. Approval of the application is at the discretion of the SVPAFA of UTHealth Houston.
- UTHealth Houston conducts security background checks on all applicants.
- It is the responsibility of Foreign applicants to have the appropriate visa to be an Observer. They must check in with the Office of International Affairs (OIA) with all original immigration documents to obtain appropriate written clearance to begin their observership.
- All Observers must read and acknowledge the "HIPAA Overview and Information Safeguards" included in the application.
- All Observers must complete the UTHealth Houston Compliance Training modules prior to or within the first weeks of their approved start date.
- UTHealth Houston schools and departments may charge separate fees to participate in the Visiting Scholars Program.

This process does not apply to individuals seeking an official medical elective or current UTHealth Houston staff or current students who are enrolled through the Registrar at UTHealth Houston.

Checklist for Observer

**VSP requires at least twelve (12) weeks to review and process applications
(which begins when the VSP Office receives the application)**

Application should be submitted no more than six (6) months prior to the proposed dates.

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| Required Documents |
| Copy of photo identification For U.S. citizens: Copy of federal or state-issued photo identification For U.S. permanent residents: Copy of Permanent Resident Card (Green Card) For non-U.S. citizens/permanent residents: Copy of passport identification page, U.S. visa stamp, Immigration forms (I-20, DS-2019, I-797, etc.) and Form I-94 (if applicable) |
| Résumé or C.V. (in English, listing academic history, certifications, licensures, employment, and training experience) |
| Copy of diploma (highest degree, with English translation if applicable) |
| Photograph (Headshot) for the UTHealth Houston ID badge (Submit photo as PDF or JPEG file) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MUST resemble a passport photo or driver's license photo - Taken within the past 2 months, showing current appearance - The photo must be color - Full face, front view with a plain white/light solid background only, no trees in the background, filters overhead, no pictures taken in a car - Photo must be taken in normal street attire, uniforms should not be worn in photograph - Clothing should be colored or dark; white apparel does not appear well on an ID badge - No hats or headgear/coverage unless for religious reasons - If you normally wear prescription glasses they should be worn for your picture - Dark glasses or nonprescription glasses with tinted lenses are not acceptable unless you need them for medical reasons. A medical certificate may be required. - Scanned or copied photos are acceptable as long as they meet the above criteria. You may also have your photo taken at an official Passport location. |
| Application Processing Fee <u>non-refundable and non-transferable</u> For U.S. citizens or U.S. permanent residents: \$100.00 USD For Foreign (non-U.S. citizen, non-U.S. permanent residents): \$775.00 USD Method of Payment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Credit/Debit Card (American Express, Discover, Master card, Visa): using the link within the online application - Money order, Cashier Check drawn on a U.S. bank and made payable to: UTHSC-H - Wire transfer (<i>contact the department coordinator for your Faculty Sponsor to receive the instructions</i>) Do not send personal checks or cash |
| Additional steps |
| Health Clearance Once the application is submitted to the VSP Office, the applicant will receive an email with a link to complete the Health History Questionnaire and upload the required health records. |
| Background Clearance During the VSP's review process, the applicant will receive an email from the background check vendor, JDP (rapidresponse@jdp.com), with a secure link to enter information such as demographic information and to give consent for the background screening to be completed. Applicants without a Social Security Number will need to enter 999-99-999 as their SSN. |

If you have questions concerning the status of your application at any time,
please contact the department coordinator for your Faculty Sponsor.

Health Clearance for Visiting Scholars Program

Once the application is submitted to the VSP Office, the applicant will receive an email with a link to complete the Health History Questionnaire and upload the required health records.

Example of email that the applicant will receive:

Please Complete Health Forms as Part of Your UTHealth Houston Observer Application For

To: _____

From: **UTHealth Houston** Visiting Scholars Program (VSP)

Dear _____

The next step in your UTHealth Houston Observer Application is to complete the health forms. Please begin by clicking on or copy/pasting the following address into your browser: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/>

UTHealth Houston School: _____

UTHealth Houston Department/Division: _____

UTHealth Houston Primary Faculty Sponsor: _____

Proposed Appointment Dates: _____

List of Required Immunizations, Tests for Visiting Scholars at UTHealth Houston:

| Environment to be encountered | Observer | Professional Trainee | Visiting Student |
|--|---|--|--|
| Office or classroom setting | • COVID-19 vaccine | • COVID-19 vaccine | • COVID-19 vaccine |
| Research lab, <u>no</u> animals, <u>no</u> potential bloodborne pathogen exposures | • COVID-19 vaccine • TB skin test | • COVID-19 vaccine • TB skin test | • COVID-19 vaccine • TB skin test |
| Research lab, <u>no</u> animals, but <u>with</u> potential bloodborne pathogen exposures | • COVID-19 vaccine • TB skin test | • COVID-19 vaccine • TB skin test • Hep B series | • COVID-19 vaccine • TB skin test • Hep B series • MMR • Tetanus/Tdap |
| Research lab, <u>with</u> animals, but <u>no</u> potential bloodborne pathogen exposures | • COVID-19 vaccine • TB skin test • MMR • Tetanus/Tdap | • COVID-19 vaccine • TB skin test • MMR • Tetanus/Tdap | • COVID-19 vaccine • TB skin test • MMR • Tetanus/Tdap |
| Research lab, <u>with</u> animals, <u>with</u> potential bloodborne pathogen exposures | • COVID-19 vaccine • TB skin test • MMR • Tetanus/Tdap | • COVID-19 vaccine • TB skin test • MMR • Tetanus/Tdap • Hep B series | • COVID-19 vaccine • TB skin test • MMR • Tetanus/Tdap • Hep B series |
| Direct patient contact | • COVID-19 vaccine • TB skin test • MMR • Tetanus/Tdap • Seasonal Influenza | • COVID-19 vaccine • MMR • Tetanus/Tdap • TB skin test • Hep B series • Varicella • Seasonal Influenza | • COVID-19 vaccine • MMR • Tetanus/Tdap • TB skin test • Hep B series • Varicella • Seasonal Influenza |

ALL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS AND LAB REPORT MUST BE IN ENGLISH.

Notes:

- Occupational Health Program Enrollment occurs when visitor is added to Animal Welfare Committee (AWC) research protocol.
- Bloodborne pathogens means pathogenic microorganisms that are present in human blood and can cause disease in humans. These pathogens include, but are not limited to, hepatitis B virus (HBV) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) (29 CFR 1910. 1030(b))
- MMR Measles (rubeola) vaccine: (2 are required if born after January 1, 1957) or Positive rubeola titer (attach lab report)
 - Mumps vaccine or Positive mumps titer (attach lab report)
 - Rubella vaccine or Positive rubella titer (attach lab report)
- Tetanus/diphtheria or Tdap (Within last 10 years)
- Varicella vaccine series (2 doses given at least 28 days apart) or Chicken pox disease (documented by health care provider) or positive varicella titer (attach lab report)
- Bacterial Meningitis (Meningococcal) vaccine (within past 5 years)
- TB skin test/+ chest xray required within the last 6 months, even if you received BCG vaccine as a child. **OR NEGATIVE QuantiFERON-TB Gold In-Tube test (QFT-GIT) or NEGATIVE T- SPOT**
- Hepatitis B vaccine series (3 injections) or positive Hepatitis B surface antibody titer (attach lab report) OR Positive Hepatitis B surface antibody titer (attach lab report)

Mandatory Compliance Training

UTHealth Houston requires that all Visiting Scholars complete the Compliance Training before or within the first weeks of their approved start date.

After a Visiting Scholar is approved, they will receive an email, within 14 days of approval, directly from the iLearn System with instructions on how to access the necessary VSP Compliance Training.

Compliance Training includes two (2) modules (Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, and HIPAA) and should take about 45 minutes.

Example of email the applicant will receive:

