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## Guidelines for VSP Application: Visiting Student

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

### Purpose:

- A Visiting Student, though uncompensated by UTHealth Houston and not enrolled in UTHealth Houston educational programs, may be given access to UTHealth Houston property, facilities and/or information systems, at the discretion of UTHealth Houston, for a specific period for approved training or educational purposes.
- The purpose of the training (in-person and/or remote) is to learn how to conduct research, data collection, and participate in other non-clinical hands-on activities (visiting clinical educational experiences are only permitted, at UTHealth Houston and/or UT Physicians Clinics, if it's specified in a program agreement with the student's home institution).
- Visiting Students are not considered volunteers or employees and are not entitled to wages or benefits.

### Eligibility:

- Student who is enrolled in an undergraduate, graduate, or professional degree program at another institution of higher education (their "home institution"), who seeks an educational experience/training, for their own benefit, from UTHealth Houston faculty and staff, at UTHealth Houston and/or UT Physicians Clinics, but is not registered and not enrolled in a course at UTHealth Houston.
- The Visiting Student's educational/training experience (in person and/or remote) at UTHealth Houston must be related to their current degree program, with an interest in a healthcare-related field and/or fulfill an educational requirement of the student's home institution. Visiting Students receive specific training in research and/or health education, appropriate to their educational objectives and qualifications. The general purpose of the training is to learn how to conduct research, data collection, and participate in other non-clinical hands-on activities (visiting clinical educational experiences are only permitted at UTHealth Houston facilities and/or UT Physicians Clinics, if it's specified in a program agreement with the student's home institution.)

*This program is not for individuals seeking an [official medical elective](#) or current UTHealth Houston staff or current students who are enrolled through the Registrar of UTHealth Houston.*

- Visiting Students must remain enrolled and in good standing, at their home institution for the duration of their learning experience at UTHealth Houston.
- Proficiency in English is required for all Visiting Students. Visiting Students are expected to speak, read, and understand English in an academic environment.
- Applicants must be at least 18 years old on the start date.
- Required agreements:
  - *For applicants attending a US institution:* in order to comply with various accreditation requirements, an agreement with the applicant's home institution will be required (before the training can begin) if the visiting student will receive credit for their educational/training experience at UTHealth Houston and/or if the educational/training experience is related to an educational requirement from their home institution and/or as determined by Legal and VSP. Agreement will be sent to the department/applicant by VSP during the review process.
  - *For applicants attending an international institution:* an agreement with the applicant's home institution is required (before the training can begin). Agreement will be sent to the department/applicant by VSP during the review process.

**Duration:**

Limited to a one consecutive year appointment.

Requests for an extension beyond a one-year appointment must be submitted (prior to the approved end date) by the department, along with an updated enrollment verification from the applicant's home institution, to be reviewed/approved by VSP in the context of the visiting student's degree requirements at their home institution.

**Fee: New - effective September 01, 2025, for Visiting Students from International Institutions**

**A non-refundable and non-transferable application processing fee of \$775.00 USD** (per application) is required for all **Visiting Students who are enrolled at an international institution**. The fee is due at the time of application submission.

**Application Process:**

To apply as a Visiting Student, 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 (if applicable), 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 training. 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. Processing time might be longer if an agreement is needed. 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.
- A Visiting Student may not begin their visit (in-person and/or remote) 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 a Visiting Student. They must check in with the Office of International Affairs (OIA) with all original immigration documents to obtain appropriate written clearance to begin their training.
- Visiting Students participating in human subjects or animal research must complete the required UTHealth Houston training.
- All Visiting Students must read and acknowledge the "HIPAA Overview and Information Safeguards" included in the application.
- All Visiting Students 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 current UTHealth Houston staff or current students who are enrolled through the Registrar at UTHealth Houston.*

*This program is not for individuals seeking an official medical elective; please contact the [McGovern Medical School Office of Admissions and Student Affairs](#) for more information on medical electives.*

# Checklist for Visiting Student

**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.**

<b>Required Documents</b>
<b>Copy of photo identification</b>
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)
<b>Résumé or C.V.</b> (in English, listing academic history, certifications, licensures, employment, and training experience)
<b>Proof of current health insurance</b> (must be valid, in the USA, for the duration of the training at UTHealth Houston)
<b>Letter from the Applicant's home institution</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- confirming enrollment (current and for the duration of training at UTHealth Houston), and good standing</li> <li>- must be on official letterhead, dated, and signed</li> </ul>
<u>If Applicant will receive credit at her/his home institution for the training at UTHealth Houston:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the letter must also clearly specify the educational requirement and information on the related course</li> </ul>
<b>Photograph (Headshot) for the UTHealth Houston ID badge</b> (Submit photo as PDF or JPEG file)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MUST resemble a passport photo or driver's license photo; the photo must be color</li> <li>- Taken within the past 2 months, showing current appearance</li> <li>- 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; No hats or headgear/coverage unless for religious reasons</li> <li>- Photo must be taken in normal street attire, uniforms should not be worn in photograph</li> <li>- Clothing should be colored or dark; white apparel does not appear well on an ID badge</li> <li>- If you normally wear prescription glasses they should be worn for your picture</li> <li>- Dark glasses or nonprescription glasses with tinted lenses are not acceptable unless you need them for medical reasons. A medical certificate may be required.</li> <li>- 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.</li> </ul>
<b>Effective September 01, 2025: For Visiting Students attending an International Institution</b>
<b>Application Processing Fee non-refundable and non-transferable: \$775.00 USD</b>
Method of Payment: Do not send personal checks or cash
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Credit/Debit Card (American Express, Discover, Master card, Visa): using the link within the online application</li> <li>- Money order, Cashier Check drawn on a U.S. bank and made payable to: UTHSC-H</li> <li>- Wire transfer (<i>contact the department coordinator for your Faculty Sponsor to receive the instructions</i>)</li> </ul>
<b>Additional steps</b>
<b>Health Clearance</b>
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.
<b>Background Clearance</b>
During the VSP's review process, the applicant will receive an email from the background check vendor, JDP ( <a href="mailto:rapidresponse@jdp.com">rapidresponse@jdp.com</a> ), 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:*

