

University of Pittsburgh

Updated Guidance and Procedures for Academic Visitors, Undergraduate Students, and High School Students

Visitors are defined as individuals who are invited to campus for educational, scholarly, or research-related purposes, who are not enrolled, employed, or appointed at the University, and are not currently participating in any University courses. Although the term "visitor" is sometimes informally applied to certain titles, such as "visiting scholar," any individual who holds a formal appointment or receives salary compensation from the University does not qualify as a visitor under these guidelines.

To ensure compliance with regulatory standards and institutional policies, the University of Pittsburgh has established formal procedures governing visits by individuals involved in educational, scholarly, or research activities.

Distinct procedures are in place for different categories of visitors, including undergraduate students, high school students, and other academic visitors. In addition, visits by individuals affiliated with Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) are also subject to the terms and conditions of the Pitt-CMU Master Facility Access Agreement.

The following sections detail the applicable procedures for each visitor category.

Academic Visitors (excluding Undergraduate and High School Students)

Academic Visits must be authorized in accordance with the University's Academic Visitor Procedure, detailed at <https://visitor.pitt.edu>, which is implemented through the Office of Research Security and Trade Compliance (ORSTC), a division of the Office of Research Protections. As part of its review process, ORSTC will screen Academic Visitors to determine whether the individual, their affiliated institution, or financial sponsors appear on any U.S. government restricted party lists. If such a designation is identified, ORSTC reserves the right to deny the visitor request.

While Academic Visitors engage in scholarly pursuits and experiential learning during their time at the University—and may, as a result, contribute to the productivity of a laboratory or academic unit—they are not, and shall not be considered, University employees. This distinction is critical to ensure compliance with federal labor regulations, including the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Accordingly, unpaid Academic Visitors must not be recruited or utilized as substitutes for regular employees. As part of its review, ORSTC may deny a visitor request if it determines that the proposed visit does not provide a clear educational

or scholarly benefit to the visitor, or if the individual is directed to engage extensively or exclusively in tasks routinely performed by University staff, such as laboratory technicians.

To ensure that visitors are genuinely engaged in experiential learning opportunities and not serving as unpaid regular employees, hosts are required to provide clear justification of the academic objectives associated with the visitor's presence on campus. Additionally, hosts must substantiate the duration requested for the visit, explicitly demonstrating how this timeframe aligns with the achievement of the visitor's stated academic goals. Generally, the duration of an Academic Visitor's presence on campus should not exceed two years, unless the appropriate dean or senior administrator of the responsibility center supports an exception and it is approved by the ORSTC.

Academic Visitors are required to meet all medical surveillance requirements that apply to University personnel with comparable access and responsibilities. In addition, they must complete all training and comply fully with all applicable University policies, procedures, and standards relevant to their activities during their visit.

Academic Visitors must also maintain adequate health insurance coverage for the duration of their stay, sufficient to cover any medical treatment that may be necessary in the event of illness or injury. As non-employees, Academic Visitors are not eligible for coverage under the University's workers' compensation insurance program.

Payments for Academic Visitors

Category 1 Academic Visits (short-term, non-laboratory visits lasting fewer than 14 days): Category 1 Academic Visitors may receive honorarium payments up to a maximum of \$5,000, subject to prior approval by the hosting department's chair or director. In addition, the University may pay for their travel and housing costs while visiting the University. Requests for honorarium payments exceeding \$5,000 necessitate additional scrutiny and must be submitted to ORSTC along with documented approvals from both the host's department chair and their dean or relevant responsibility center senior administrator. These approvals will be assessed as part of the standard Academic Visitor review process and may be escalated to the Vice Chancellor for Research Protections and the Senior Vice Chancellor for Research, who will render a final determination regarding the request.

Category 2 Academic Visits (lasting longer than 14 days) and **Category 3 Academic Visits** (involving laboratory or clinical research): **No honorarium or other payment is currently permitted for Category 2 or Category 3 visitors**, with the exception of living allowance payments to visiting graduate students enrolled in degree-granting programs at

other institutions. Hosts who wish to request an exception must provide the proposed payment amount, type of payment, and justification for the payment to ORSTC. Written approvals from both the host's department chair and their dean or responsibility center senior administrator must be obtained and included with the visitor request submission. These approvals will be forwarded to the Vice Chancellor for Research Protections and the Senior Vice Chancellor for Research, who will make a final determination.

Procedures for Undergraduate Visitors

Undergraduate students enrolled at institutions other than the University of Pittsburgh frequently seek experiential learning opportunities involving laboratory research, clinical activities, or other scholarly endeavors. The University welcomes such engagements, provided they are conducted in compliance with institutional policy.

All undergraduate visits from institutions other than Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) must adhere to the [*Office of the Provost Guidelines for Undergraduate Students Participating in Research*](#).

All undergraduate visitors must complete the same training and medical surveillance requirements applicable to University personnel with equivalent duties and access. They are also required to comply fully with all relevant University policies, procedures, and standards during their engagement.

Undergraduate visitors may receive a living allowance if such support is included in the program under which they are hosted and approved by the school overseeing the activity.

All undergraduate visitors (who are not hired through the All-Temps system) must provide proof of adequate health insurance coverage for the duration of their visit. The coverage must be sufficient to address any potential medical treatment resulting from illness or injury incurred while participating in University activities.

Undergraduate students from external institutions (excluding CMU, addressed below) may be hosted at the University of Pittsburgh under one of the following mechanisms:

- 1 **Temporary Paid Employee (All-Temps Mechanism):** Students may be employed temporarily through the University's All-Temps service.
- 2 **Research Intern:** Students may participate as research interns in accordance with the [*Provost Guidelines for Undergraduate Students Participating in Research*](#). Approval must be obtained through the school of the hosting faculty member.
 - Each intern must have an approved *Research Internship Plan* as defined in Appendix A of the [*Provost Guidelines*](#). Certain structured undergraduate programs officially recognized by the University may utilize an umbrella

Research Internship Plan designated for that program. In such cases, an individual plan is not required.

- 3 **Observer:** Students who do not participate directly in research activities may be hosted as observers, provided they meet the eligibility and activity criteria detailed in Appendix B of the [Provost Guidelines](#).
- 4 **Course-Registered Student:** Undergraduate visitors may also be enrolled in a University course.

Special Provisions for Carnegie Mellon University Undergraduate Students

The Pitt-CMU Master Facility Access Agreement requires that CMU undergraduate students be approved for visits through a different process. Such students must follow the procedures outlined on the *Academic Visitor* website under “[Eligibility Requirements](#).” These individuals should not follow the standard processes described above for non-CMU undergraduate students.

Procedures for High School Visitors

High school students seeking to participate in activities at the University of Pittsburgh must do so as part of a formally approved program, such as [these programs](#).

To ensure the safety and well-being of minor participants, any individual who will directly interact with high school students must complete the required child protection clearances. These clearances are mandated under Pennsylvania law and administered through the [University’s Office of Human Resources](#). These requirements apply to all University personnel, volunteers, and other individuals who will supervise, instruct, or otherwise engage with minor participants during their visit.