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**Policy Type** [Executive Vice President & Provost](#)

**Contact Office**

[Executive Vice President and Provost \(Office of the\)](#)

**Oversight Executive**

[Executive Vice President and Provost](#)

**Applies To**

Academic Division

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**Reason for Policy**

Individuals pursuing graduate-level research training without enrolling in a degree program or earning academic credit may be in residence at the University of Virginia (UVA) as a Visiting Graduate Researcher (VGR). The use of established, formal processes in this policy help facilitate arrangements to sponsor and host these visitors, allowing them to access certain UVA services and participate in University life and programs while they are here.

**Definition of Terms**

**Visiting Graduate Researcher (VGR)**

Status for a non-degree-seeking and non-credit earning graduate student that is determined by their continued enrollment as a student in good standing in a graduate-level degree-seeking program at another institution of higher education, while in residence at UVA for the purposes of conducting research, often for short and irregular periods. VGRs are not enrolled as students at UVA.

**Visiting Graduate Researcher Term**

A monthly course in the non-credit career of the University's Student Information System.

## **Policy Statement**

Any individual who meets the definition of a Visiting Graduate Researcher (VGR) as outlined in this policy must be entered into the University's Student Information System (SIS) as such. VGRs must be invited and sponsored by a member of UVA's faculty and meet the criteria in the VGR definition for the duration of their residence at the University. A VGR's visit at UVA may not exceed two years continuous. In instances when a VGR's visit extends beyond one year, the VGR and sponsoring faculty member should review the relationship to ensure that mutual benefit continues.

Enrollment in a degree-seeking program or enrolling for academic credit is inconsistent with the purpose of this policy; VGRs who wish to earn UVA academic credit must instead enroll as a student and pay the relevant tuition and fees.

Current UVA students, staff, and faculty are not eligible for VGR status. Students visiting under student exchange agreements are governed by the terms of enrollment outlined in the underlying exchange agreement and are not subject to the provisions of this policy. All VGRs must maintain and be able to demonstrate proof of health insurance for the duration of their visit.

### **A. Registration:**

For the purposes of registration, a Visiting Graduate Researcher term will be measured by the calendar month; VGR visits may occur any time throughout the calendar year. VGRs must be registered in a VGR term in SIS for each calendar month they are in residence at UVA. In instances when a VGR's visit extends by some portion into a given month, they will be registered for that full month; VGR terms will not be prorated. VGRs and their faculty sponsors should plan visits accordingly.

### **B. Visiting Graduate Researcher Fee:**

Visiting Graduate Researchers will be assessed a fee associated with their status as a member of the University community. Paying the VGR fee will provide VGRs access to certain central services appropriate to their status. In instances when a VGR's visit extends by some portion into a new VGR term, they will be assessed the VGR fee for that full VGR term; the VGR fee will not be prorated. Refunds of the VGR fee will be issued only when a VGR cancels their visit more than seven days in advance of the start of the month.

### **C. Responsibilities of the Sponsoring Faculty Member:**

Visiting Graduate Researchers must be invited and sponsored by a member of UVA's faculty for the duration of their visit. The sponsoring faculty member must issue a formal invitation to the prospective VGR, with a copy to their director of graduate studies (or equivalent), which should include the VGR's anticipated activities and responsibilities, the start and end dates of the VGR's residence at UVA, any resources to be provided, and reference to this policy. Sponsoring faculty members are expected to abide by the terms of the letter of invitation. In the event that a VGR visit is no longer mutually beneficial, the sponsoring faculty member may arrange comparable accommodations with a new sponsoring faculty member. If the sponsoring faculty member is unable to do so, or if doing so would not be in the best interest of the University, the VGR shall be provided reasonable notice that VGR status is being terminated.

It will be the responsibility of the sponsoring faculty member's department to work with their school's graduate admission office to admit and enroll the VGR in SIS and facilitate the issuance of a University ID.

Faculty sponsoring a VGR must adhere to all sponsor requirements when proposing, conducting, or reporting research; this may include, but is not limited to, identifying work to be performed by a VGR as an unfunded collaboration and/or including the VGR's work on research performance progress reports. Faculty are advised to consult the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) with any questions regarding prior approval and/or notification requirements for specific sponsored programs or sponsors.

If a VGR adjusts the end date for their visit after completing the VGR application, the sponsoring faculty member will work with their department or school administrators to ensure that the change is adjusted in SIS. Failure to do so may result in wrongful VGR fee charges or the inability to access certain University services.

VGRs will have access to basic University IT assets such as a computing ID, student email account, NetBadge, UVA Box, and many Microsoft services, however, access to IT assets may differ by school. In the event that an incoming VGR will need access to certain computing infrastructure, sponsoring faculty members should check with their department and/or dean's office for a complete understanding of the assets that may be available.

#### **D. Responsibilities of the Visiting Graduate Researcher:**

Visiting Graduate Researchers are responsible for completing the VGR application by the first of the month prior to the month in which their visit will begin. Access to the VGR application will be provided by the sponsoring faculty member or the sponsoring faculty member's school. When completing the application, VGRs will provide UVA evidence of their affiliation as a degree-seeking graduate student at another institution.

All Visiting Graduate Researchers must have health insurance (VGRs are not eligible for the UVA student health plan). VGRs will have access to UVA's Student Health Center but must complete the pre-entrance health form appropriate to the department in which they will be visiting and verify their health insurance/hard waiver prior to accessing Student Health services. Upon receiving services from Student Health, VGRs can print a copy of services charges as posted to their Student Financial Services (SFS) account and submit a copy of the charges to their insurance provider for approval for reimbursement.

Visiting Graduate Researchers are guests of the University and are expected to comport themselves with utmost professionalism consistent with expectations for other members of the University community. Such expectations include, but are not limited to, those related to research activity and community health and safety standards. Should a VGR behave inconsistently with these expectations, the University reserves the right to terminate VGR status at any time, with or without cause. Furthermore, providing false or misleading information, including omission of relevant information, to the University and/or in the case of foreign nationals, to the U.S. government as part of the visa application process, will be considered grounds for immediate termination of the VGR relationship.

#### **E. Provisions Specific to International Visiting Graduate Researchers:**

Faculty members sponsoring international Visiting Graduate Researchers must contact UVA's International Studies Office (ISO) as well as their dean's office to alert them of an incoming international

VGR no later than the prospective VGR's application deadline as outlined in this policy. Departments must immediately notify the ISO whenever there is a change to the dates affiliated with a VGR's visit, which includes both start and end dates for a VGR's visit.

In addition to the VGR fee, international VGRs will be assessed a one-time visa processing fee, regardless of the duration of their visit. The health insurance maintained by an international VGR must meet the minimum requirements required by the U.S. J-1 visa program.

There are many federal laws and regulations governing the provision of certain services and the export of controlled items (e.g. material samples, equipment, software/source code and prototypes) and information (i.e.: transfer to or access by a foreign national in the U.S. or abroad). Normal University activities can constitute regulated services and items and information used in or produced by university activities can be subject to export controls. The Office of Export Controls is responsible for providing support for University activities subject to Federal export control and sanction regulations. Sponsoring faculty members are responsible for working with the appropriate export control officers to ensure compliance with federal and University export policy.

#### **F. Payment to VGRs:**

Visiting Graduate Researchers are ineligible to serve as Graduate Research or Teaching Assistants (GRAs or GTAs) at UVA or receive compensation for activities performed in their capacity as a VGR. Because VGRs are not enrolled students, they are not eligible for student wage employment. Additional guidance regarding payments to individuals working within academic areas can be found in the [Provost's Wage Authorization](#).

When invited to participate in a training program or conference by the sponsoring faculty member, the VGR may receive stipend or subsistence allowance, travel allowance and registration fees from a sponsored program that is authorized to cover "participant support costs." While PIs are not obligated to pay such costs for VGRs training in their labs, those who wish to invite a VGR as a participant to a training program or to attend a conference, should work with their department's research administrator or contact the Office of Sponsored Programs for further guidance. Therefore, while VGR fees cannot be directly charged to a sponsoring faculty member's Sponsored Programs account, it may be possible to provide a stipend to a VGR for the purposes of paying the VGR fee.

VGRs may be reimbursed for expenses incurred on behalf of the University as provided for by policy [FIN-004: Travel, Meals, and Entertainment Expenses Incurred on Behalf of the University](#).

#### **G. Change in Student Status:**

In the event that a VGR is admitted into a degree-granting program of the University, school- and program-specific policies will govern what transfer credits may be counted toward a degree following admission.

#### **H. Data Management:**

In accordance with policy [IRM-003: Data Protection of University Information](#), all University data must be appropriately protected to provide for a controlled and lawful release. Access to legally restricted (e.g., Family Educational Rights Privacy Act - FERPA) or limited-access data by non-UVa employees sponsored by a University manager, requires that a written request be made to the appropriate Executive Data Steward, Data Steward, or Deputy Data Steward.

## **I. Compliance with Policy**

Failure to meet the provisions of this policy, including, but not limited to, neglecting to submit the VGR application by the first day of the month prior to the month of visit, notifying and coordinating with the designated University offices, and paying the VGR fee, may result in a denied application. Individuals subject to this policy who do not meet the provisions herein will not be considered authorized VGRs and may be asked to leave UVA.

Questions about this policy should be directed to the [Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost](#).

## **Procedures**

Schools are responsible for quick admitting incoming VGRs via the graduate admission application. This should take place approximately 30 days before the VGR's arrival to ensure they will have a SIS account created prior to their arrival. Failure to complete the quick admit process in this timeframe may result in the VGR's inability to access University services. Schools may either provide the link to the VGR application on their websites or intentionally distribute it directly to prospective VGRs.

Faculty members sponsoring international VGRs should contact the University's International Studies Office (ISO) as well as their dean's office to alert them of an incoming international VGR as soon as possible and in advance of the VGR's arrival at the University.

## **Related Information**

[PROV-001: Graduate Assistantships](#)

[PROV-012: Financial Aid to Non-Degree-Seeking Students](#)

[PROV-013: Appointment of Visiting Faculty and Visiting Scholars](#)

[HRM-002: Issuance of Use of University Identification Cards.](#)

[FIN-004: Travel, Meals, and Entertainment Expenses Incurred on Behalf of the University](#)

[FIN-043: Managing Export and Sanction Compliance in Support of University Activities](#)

[RES-009: Solicitation, Clearance, Acceptance and Ongoing Management of Sponsored Programs](#)

[IRM-003: Data Protection of University Information](#)

[Provost Wage Authorization for the Academic Areas](#)

[Visiting Graduate Researcher FAQs](#)

[Visiting Graduate Researcher Application](#)

[Visiting Graduate Researcher Fee Components](#)

[Visiting Graduate Researcher Stipend Process](#)

Information on the VGR fee can be obtained by contacting [Student Financial Services](#). Payment of the VGR fee will provide VGRs access to certain University services, including Student Health.

Visitors may purchase a University parking permit at the discretion of the University's [Parking and Transportation Services](#). University and city buses are free with a University ID card.

Membership may be purchased through the University's [Intramural-Recreational Sports](#) office for access to University's gyms and other recreational facilities.

VGRs are eligible to receive an academic ID. VGRs should visit the [Academic ID Card office website](#) for instructions on how to obtain their ID.

**Major Category** [Executive Vice President & Provost Policies](#)

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Academic Division.

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