Policy and Procedures for Visiting Scholars, Postdoctoral Scholars, Visiting Students, and other Visiting Researchers

Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering
University of California, Berkeley

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Visiting scholars can make valuable contributions to the department during short-term stays. Visiting scholars (including postdoctoral scholars, visiting student researchers, and other visiting researchers) are invited by a CEE faculty member based on the strength of their research and the ability of the faculty sponsor to mentor the visitor and provide financial support when required by the university. Scholars generally remain in the department for six months to one year, although a request for a stay of up to two years may be approved based on compelling need. Appointments are approved one year at a time. Visiting scholar definitions and other pertinent information can be found on the campus Visiting Scholar Postdoc Affairs (VSPA) web site at http://vspa.berkeley.edu/.

The purpose of the policy on visiting scholar appointments made by the department is to control the workload for processing the invitations, appointments, and visa applications in the case of international visitors. There are financial obligations that must be met by the visitor and the faculty sponsor. The steps for obtaining a visa for international visitors to the United States require substantial coordination between the staff, university offices, and the visitor, and take four months or longer. The policy is not applicable to students who visit the department under the auspices of the International Visitors and Exchange Office (IVEO) or through Concurrent Enrollment. Visiting scholar appointments made by other campus units are not covered by this policy, except for assignment of a desk in CEE space.

The policy establishes departmental fees and deadlines for processing visitor appointments. The department will assess a fee of $500 for appointment, and each extension, of all Postdoctoral Scholars, Visiting Student Researchers and domestic Visiting Scholars who are U.S. Citizens or Permanent Residents. A fee of $1,000 will be assessed when appointing an international Visiting Scholar, plus $500 for each extension. The fee can be paid by either the faculty sponsor or the visitor. This fee covers the direct administrative costs of processing the appointments and other support services such as computing.

A request for an appointment or extension of a visiting scholar must be submitted to the department at least four (4) months before the effective date of the appointment or extension. The department's established deadline dates are February 1 for all summer session appointments, May 1 for all fall semester appointments, and September 15 for all spring semester appointments. The department will not process an appointment or extension request on a shorter notice without exceptional approval from the Department Chair. Faculty sponsors must be in-residence during their visitor's stay and are expected to mentor and guide the visitor's research.

This policy will be placed in effect 01/01/2015.

Financial obligations for visiting scholars and faculty sponsors and visa requirements

The department has established fees for processing appointment and extension requests:

	Visiting Scholars (International)	Visiting Scholars (Domestic)	Postdoctoral Scholars and Visiting Student Researchers
Appointment	$1,000	$500	$500
Extension	$500	$500	$500

If paid by the faculty sponsor, the fee may be recharged to a faculty sponsor's research account or discretionary account subject to the terms governing the accounts. If paid by the visitor, proof of payment via bank wire transfer or check must be included by the faculty sponsor with the appointment/extension request by the stated deadline.

Visitors must show proof they can meet the minimum monthly funding requirements for themselves and any accompanying dependents for the entire period of their appointment. All Postdoctoral Scholars must also meet the minimum stipend rates based on experience level according to NIH guidelines, paid through their fellowship and/or their faculty sponsor.

The Berkeley International Office (BIO) requires payment of a processing fee for each new J-1 visa application, which an international visitor will need to submit by check made to the UC Regents or via wire transfer. International undergraduates will be charged an increased fee for their DS-2019 documents from BIO if 51% or more of their funding is from personal funds. In addition, J-1 scholars will need to pay a one-time fee from their home countries to cover the costs of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Student and Exchange Visitors Information System (SEVIS).

Visitors are responsible for maintaining health insurance, which meets the minimum coverage requirements set by the university, for themselves and their dependents for the entire length of their stay. They may hold private insurance or may pay for coverage offered by the university.

The U.S. Department of State will soon implement new J visa rules. One of the new rules requires documenting an "objective measurement" of English language proficiency for al J-1 Exchange Visitors.

The campus office for Visiting Scholars and Postdoc Affairs (VSPA) requires all visitors, other than postdoctoral scholars, to pay an annual university services fee to that office. A list of services that the fee covers is at http://vspa.berkeley.edu/vsbenefits.html.

International visitors who attempt to enter the United States in an inappropriate immigration category (i.e. B-1/WB or B-2/WT) when their intention is to do research at the university, may be denied entry by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and returned to their

home country. During their authorized stay in the United States, international visitors are required to maintain their visa status. This includes notifying our department, BIO and DHS of any address change and other changes in information that would affect their visa status.

Procedures for requesting appointment/extensions

The sponsoring faculty member must complete and submit the relevant request form available on our CEE website at http://www.ce.berkeley.edu/people/scholars by the stated deadline. Late requests must be approved by the Department Chair. Program Leader approval is required for all appointment and extension requests, including the assignment of a desk space, if applicable.

Deadlines for all visitor appointment and extension requests

Feb. 1: Deadline for all summer session appointments.
May 1: Deadline for all fall semester appointments.
Sept. 15: Deadline for all spring semester appointments**.**

VSPA allows students who are working on their Masters degree, as well as undergraduate students, to use the Visiting Student Researcher (VSR) title. The VSR should be a student coming to participate and contribute to research that is of mutual interest and benefit to our department and our faculty. VSR status is not appropriate for those students who will come to UCB to study.

Procedure for processing requests for appointment or extension of visitors Once verified by the CEE staff designate, request forms will be forwarded to ERSO Team 2 for processing. Team 2 will work with the faculty sponsor and the visitor to process the required forms, documentation, and fees for the visitor's invitation and appointment.

After approval of the completed application packet by the Department Chair, the packet will be sent to the Associate Dean for Research for approval. Visa application documents for international visitors who require a J-1 visa will be submitted to the Berkeley International Office (BIO) for processing. Applications for a J-1 visa take four months or longer to process. In addition, visitors need sufficient time to arrange an interview with the U.S. Embassy in their home country prior to departure for the United States.