2.3.1 Activating Nonmatriculated Graduate Students: Policy

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Summary

In specified circumstances, individuals may apply for non-matriculated graduate student status. In other circumstances, qualified individuals may be invited to accept positions as nonmatriculated graduate students.

Rationale

The norm for graduate study at Stanford University is full-time matriculation in a degree program. In some circumstances, it may benefit both the individual and the university to permit qualified individuals to participate in graduate-level courses and/or research as nonmatriculated students. Individuals may apply to non-degree-granting programs or to enroll in specific courses on a nonmatriculating basis. In addition, individuals may be appointed to "Visiting Student Researcher" status, a category of nonmatriculated graduate student who will not enroll in classes, but will be involved in graduate-level research.

Authority:
- Graduate Admissions Office [1]

Applicability:
Applicable to all nonmatriculated graduate student appointments and enrollments at Stanford University, with the exception of:

1. Summer Session enrollments,
2. Continuing Studies Program enrollments,
3. Students of New Faculty (GAP 2.4),
4. Postdoctoral Scholar appointments, and
5. Non-Degree Option (NDO) students (through the Stanford Center for Professional Development)

Jump To:

1. Nonmatriculated Study Involving Participation and Enrollment in Courses
2. Non-Degree-Granting Programs
3. Visiting Student Researchers
1. Nonmatriculated Study Involving Participation and Enrollment in Courses

Eligibility for consideration for nonmatriculated enrollment is restricted to two groups of applicants:

1. Stanford alumni who wish to return to Stanford to take courses that are prerequisites for Medical School admission, such as undergraduate Biology or Chemistry courses, are eligible to apply for nonmatriculated status. An application form, application fee, statement of purpose, and three letters of recommendation are required. The decision to admit or deny is made by the Director of Graduate Admissions in his or her discretion and on the basis of relevant factors, including (but not limited to) a GPA of at least 3.0 and positive letters of recommendation.

Applicants who graduated from other universities are not eligible to take the prerequisites for Medical School at Stanford.

2. Individuals who hold a bachelor’s degree or equivalent and wish to take courses in a specific department that allows non-degree students are eligible to apply for nonmatriculated status. An application form, application fee, statement of purpose, original transcripts, and three letters of recommendation are required. The decision to admit or deny is made by the chair of the department in which they wish to take courses (in his or her discretion) and conveyed in writing to the Graduate Admissions Office. Applicants are notified of the decision by the Graduate Admissions Office.

Students who are granted nonmatriculated status are charged the 8-10 unit rate (or the appropriate higher rate if enrolled in 11 units or more) for each quarter in which they are enrolled, and may enroll for a maximum of one academic year. Nonmatriculated status is a privilege and not a right; the nonmatriculated status may be revoked at the University’s discretion (and after consideration of such factors as the University considers relevant in the particular case) at the end of any quarter of enrollment.

Nonmatriculated students are not permitted to enroll in certain courses, such as those in the following departments or programs: film and broadcasting courses in Art; all courses in Computer Science, Electrical Engineering, International Policy Studies, and the School of Medicine. Nonmatriculated students are expected to limit their enrollment to classes in the departments in which they have been admitted.

Nonmatriculated students receive grades and academic credit for courses satisfactorily completed and may obtain an official transcript. They may use university facilities and services. In classes of limited enrollment, students in degree programs have priority.

Nonmatriculated students may apply for housing but will have a low priority for assignment. No departmental or university fellowships (named awards), assistantships, or Stanford loans are available for nonmatriculated students. Nonmatriculated students are not eligible for a leave of absence.

Nonmatriculated students who later apply for admission to a degree program must meet standard admission requirements and should not anticipate special priority because of work completed as a nonmatriculated student. Students who are admitted to a degree program may apply a maximum of 15 units of nonmatriculated study toward the master’s degree and 30 units for the Engineer or Ph.D. degree, subject to the approval of the degree granting department.
2. Non-Degree-Granting Programs

Stanford University has established a limited number of formal non-degree-granting programs within individual departments. These include the Knight Fellowship Program for mid-career journalists (Communication Department), and the Stegner Fellows Program for selected authors (Creative Writing Program, within the English Department).

Individuals may apply to these programs directly. Application requirements, admissions decisions, tuition requirements and financial support are all handled by the specific program. Individuals who are admitted to these programs will be registered at Stanford as nonmatriculated graduate students in the appropriate program. Upon completion of their program, they will receive a transcript and certificate of program completion.

3. Visiting Student Researchers

In limited instances, it is to the benefit of Stanford faculty to permit graduate students who have not yet obtained a Ph.D. (or its foreign equivalent) to engage in research on the Stanford campus. This could include students from other universities who are engaged in graduate-level research in a field of interest to the faculty member, or students doing a research rotation as part of a larger research study or grant. These students must be registered as Visiting Student Researchers (VSR) if they are in residence at Stanford for more than 30 days; they may be registered as Visiting Student Researchers if they are in residence for fewer than 30 days in order to receive the services available to VSR.

Note that this category of nonmatriculating student is different from that of a Visiting Scholar, a non-student category of individuals holding a doctoral degree or recognized as an expert in their field. The Research Policy Handbook includes documents on both Visiting Student Researchers [8] and Visiting Scholars [9].

Terms of Appointment

Visiting Student Researchers are appointed at Stanford as nonmatriculated graduate students for the purpose of participating in research activities under the guidance of a particular faculty member. They may not enroll in or audit any classes. Visiting Student Researcher appointments are limited to one year in duration. There is no Stanford transcript that records Visiting Student Researcher status or dates of appointment, and Stanford cannot certify Visiting Student Researchers for deferment of US educational loans.

Invited persons must be qualified to conduct research at a level comparable to that of other Stanford graduate students, and the research must be of benefit to Stanford as well as to the visitor.

Forms for the appointment of Visiting Student Researchers are submitted to the Graduate Admissions Office by the department issuing the invitation. See departmental procedures https://www.stanford.edu/dept/registrar/staff/visiting_researchers.htm [10]

Under limited circumstances, the faculty sponsor may request an extension of the Visiting Student Researcher’s appointment beyond one year. Such extensions require the concurrence of the student’s home institution. Extensions beyond the second year are extremely rare, and require approval in advance from the Office of the Vice Provost for Graduate Education.

Visa Processing
Citizens of other countries who enter the United States to be Visiting Student Researchers at Stanford must have a DS 2019 Certificate (to apply for a J-1 visa) issued by the Bechtel International Center [11] and must be registered throughout their period of residency at Stanford, including Summer Quarter, to maintain their visa status.

Visiting Student Researchers requiring a visa will be charged a one-time visa processing fee.

**Fees and Financial Support**

Visiting Student Researchers are charged a monthly Visiting Student Researcher Fee for each month in which they hold this appointment at Stanford, including partial months.

Visiting Student Researchers may waive the University’s student medical insurance plan only if they have comparable coverage with another carrier and submit proof of the comparable coverage prior to the term start date. If not waived, Visiting Student Researchers will be charged the applicable quarterly Cardinal Care premium for each full or partial quarter of their residence at Stanford. Visiting Student Researchers are also charged the quarterly Campus Health Services Fee (including Summer Quarter) for each quarter or partial quarter in residence. This fee cannot be waived or pro-rated. (See Vaden web site [12] for additional information.)

Visiting Student Researchers are not entitled to any financial support from Stanford University. They may not be appointed to any assistantship positions nor hold any named Stanford fellowships. Hourly employment on research grants or contracts may be possible, as long as the work is appropriate to the project and budgeted. Departments who wish to pay fees for these students or provide other financial support may do so with unrestricted departmental or faculty funds. Funds intended for the support of matriculated Stanford students may not be used to support Visiting Student Researchers.

Any payments of Stanford fees for Visiting Student Researchers, and any stipends provided for their living expenses, are tax-reportable for state and federal income tax. In addition, if the student is a non-US resident for tax purposes, and their home country does not have a tax treaty with the United States, Stanford is obligated to withhold or charge 14% federal tax on any of these payments. Departments that initiate payments for non-US resident VSR students, including any stipends or payment of their Stanford fees, should contact the Payroll Office regarding tax charges.

See Visiting Student Researchers in GFS [13] [Job Aid, pdf file].

**Student Privileges and Responsibilities**

Visiting Student Researchers may not enroll in or audit any courses, but in quarters when they are registered, they are eligible for the usual student benefits of nonmatriculated student status. Students in this status are eligible for graduate on-campus housing, on a space-available basis. They are also eligible for participation in the programs offered by the Graduate Life Office.

Visiting Student Researchers are subject to the rules and regulations of Stanford University. These include:

- intellectual property; Visiting Student Researchers are required to sign an SU-18 Stanford Patent and Copyright Agreement
- the Honor Code and Fundamental Standard; Visiting Student Researchers who commit violations of these behavioral standards are subject to termination of their Stanford appointment
- required training; the faculty member who invited the Visiting Student Researcher is responsible to assure that they receive any required training in order to be able to carry out their research at Stanford, including appropriate health & safety training, instruction in the protection of human subjects, or any other instruction required by the work that the student will do here.