UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

# International Visiting Graduate Student (IVGS) Agreement

The University of Toronto (U of T) encourages qualified international graduate students to study at the University in order to foster the exchange of ideas and to allow students to receive specialized training and participate in research collaboration. Qualified graduate students from abroad can continue their studies towards a degree at their home university by completing part of their research at the University of Toronto for a study period of up to three sessions, where a single session is defined as a four-month academic period in the University's academic year: Fall (September to December), Winter (January to April), or Summer (May to August). Students have the opportunity to study with top research faculty engaged in cutting-edge research and can take advantage of the University's world-class libraries and other resources.

This Agreement sets out a protocol for the recognition of International Visiting Graduate Students (IVGS). The IVGS Program exists to facilitate study visits by international graduate students who do not fall under an approved exchange program with the University of Toronto. These students are registered as non-degree, visiting, students with the School of Graduate Studies. The students also maintain registration at their home university and are expected to return to their home university to complete their Master's or Doctoral program.

International graduate students who intend to visit for less than one month are not eligible for the IVGS program. Such students only need a letter of invitation from the faculty member who will serve as their host supervisor and should arrange for their own health insurance, as they are not eligible for the University Health Insurance Plan (UHIP). Such students should contact the nearest Canadian Embassy, Consulate, or High Commission for advice on what travel documents might be necessary.

International visiting graduate students who will be visiting the University for a minimum of one month is eligible to apply to the IVGS program and must apply by submitting a complete IVGS application package, defined below. If approved, the visiting student will be instructed to complete an IVGS intake form with the Centre for International Experience, and a licensed immigration advisor will assess and confirm the legal travel documents the student will need to apply for.

**TERMS OF THE IVGS AGREEMENT**

1. IVGS students must be registered in good standing in a full-time research Master's or Doctoral program at an accredited postsecondary institution.
2. IVGS students will be registered as full-time, non-degree, visiting graduate students at the School of Graduate Studies, University of Toronto.
3. IVGS students will be studying with their supervisor at the University of Toronto on subjects related to their Master's or Doctoral program. IVGS students will be enrolled in the course code RST 9999Y Research/Thesis for the duration of their study period at the University. This is a required course for all University of Toronto graduate students while they are preparing their Master's or Doctoral thesis. This course has no class meetings and reflects research activity only. IVGS students are not permitted to register in any other courses at the university. Upon completion of their study period at the University of Toronto, IVGS students may request a letter confirming their participation in the IVGS program from the School of Graduate Studies, and/or a letter outlining their research accomplishments from their supervisor.
4. It is the responsibility of the student to identify a supervisor, who holds graduate faculty membership at the University of Toronto.
5. The University of Toronto supervisor must write a **letter of invitation** addressed to the student's home supervisor. The letter will address issues such as intellectual property, access to equipment and supplies, research ethics, and space. The letter will be signed by:
    a. the U of T supervisor with graduate faculty membership
    b. the chair or equivalent of the graduate unit in which the host supervisor holds their graduate faculty membership
    c. the student's supervisor at their home university
    d. the home university supervisor's chair or equivalent
    e. the student
6. IVGS students assume responsibilities to the University of Toronto and must abide by all University of Toronto's policies, regulations, rules and procedures including but not limited to the U of T Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters, Code of Student Conduct, Policy on Ethical Conduct in Research, Intellectual Property Guidelines and the Inventions Policy.
7. The IVGS fees provide students with access to university services (e.g. library, e-mail access, computing) and to student services such as recreation facilities and the Centre for International Experience.
8. Admission to the IVGS Program is at the complete discretion of the University of Toronto, School of Graduate Studies, and does not guarantee admission into a graduate degree program at the University of Toronto. Any student who wishes to apply to a graduate degree program at the University of Toronto must do so following the regular application process in competition with all other applicants. Courses audited as an IVGS student are normally not eligible for transfer credit.
9. The IVGS student's registration may be terminated at any time with written notice by the University of Toronto, School of Graduate Studies.

**PROCESS AND ADMINISTRATION**

1. An IVGS visit must be mutually agreed upon by the student, their supervisor (or equivalent) at the home university, the home supervisor's chair or department head, the proposed U of T supervisor, and the chair or department head of the U of T supervisor's graduate unit.

2. Upon finalizing and agreeing on the details and conditions of the visit, the student will submit an online IVGS application; the following documents will be provided as part of the online application:
    a. **Letter of invitation (see #5 above)**: the letter must be co-signed by the five parties and confirm supervisory arrangements and all aspects of the visit (including intellectual property, travel costs, study stipend (if any), access to equipment and supplies, research ethics, and space).
    b. **Student's academic *curriculum vitae.***
    c. **Funding documentation (if applicable)**: any letters or statements indicating duration and amount of funding the student will be receiving as part of the IVGS visit (e.g. awards, scholarships, stipends, travel grant)

3. The IVGS application will be reviewed and approved by both the U of T host department and the School of Graduate Studies. If approved, the School of Graduate Studies will provide instructions to the student to complete an intake form with an immigration advisor from the Centre for International Experience to assess what legal travel documents are required for the student to enter Canada. After this assessment, the School of Graduate Studies will issue an IVGS Letter of Acceptance to assist with the student's application for temporary residence.

    Normally, the start and end date of the IVGS program will coincide with the start and end of a session. If a mid-session study period is requested, the student must pay non-academic incidental fees and UHIP fees for each session of registration. **In signing this agreement, all parties acknowledge that the student is liable for the full fees of any session in which they are registered, even if they attend for only part of that session.**

    **Note: applications should be received by the School of Graduate Studies well in advance of the start of the study period. The School of Graduate Studies recommends submitting an IVGS application four months in advance of the intended start date. Lead time will vary depending on what Canadian legal status documents the student will need.**

4. IVGS students are not charged tuition fees at the University of Toronto (but may be charged fees at their home institution). Other fees are required. IVGS students' fees will be posted at https://www.acorn.utoronto.ca. Students should pay fees on arrival, either through a Canadian bank, or by credit card on ACORN. Fees include:
    a. Compulsory, non-academic, student incidental fees. Fee estimates for the upcoming academic year can be found on the IVGS webpage**.** The non-academic incidental fees include Athletics, Hart House, Health Services, Student Services fees and various campus-wide and divisional student societies. Students are charged the full sessional fees of every session in which they are registered, even if they are registered for only part of that session.
    b. The University Health Insurance Plan (UHIP) fees. This mandatory health plan ensures that all international students have basic health care coverage while studying in Ontario. International students are required to pay for UHIP coverage regardless of any other coverage they may have. A form will be provided to IVGS students upon arrival in Toronto, allowing for the UHIP fee to be adjusted depending on the duration of the visit. Completed forms must be submitted to the UHIP Office. It is important to note that UHIP does not include travel coverage. Students are encouraged to seek private travel insurance if they plan to travel out of province. For contact details and additional UHIP information visit the Centre for International Experience website.

**SUPERVISORY LETTER OF INVITATION**

A supervisory letter of invitation must be agreed to and signed by the five parties specified above. Although the details of a Letter of Invitation will vary, the following topics and information must be included:

- Letterhead of the graduate unit, University of Toronto
- Addressed to the home supervisor of the IVGS student
- Full Name of student
- Student's home program and degree level (Master's or PhD)
- Student's home academic institution and department (where currently enrolled)
- Name of home supervisor and supervisor's department and name of supervisor's chair or centre head
- Name of U of T supervisor and graduate unit, with name of supervisor's chair or equivalent
- Study period dates (precise start and end dates of visit)
- A clear statement regarding the purpose of the visit and/or the research focus
- Arrangements for intellectual property (if applicable)
- Arrangements for research ethics approvals (if applicable)
- Arrangements for financial and accommodation considerations (e.g. stipend, travel reimbursement, research expenses)
- Use of resources (e.g. equipment; space; supplies; required health and safety training)
- Arrangements for supervision during study period (e.g. frequency of contact, how progress will be assessed)
- Other documents may be attached if required