

VURP

[VURP/FLEXVURP](#)[VURP](#)[FlexVURP](#)**Eligibility**

Student should be a continuing undergraduate and eligible for registration at their home institution; have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.2/4.0; must have completed one full academic year at home institution; and not be under any academic or disciplinary sanction at home institution.

International students coming from a non-English speaking country should be able to demonstrate sufficient English proficiency needed to successfully undertake a research project at Caltech and day-to-day activities. This may be demonstrated in various ways, including: the strength of the written research proposal; a video call interview with the mentor; previous coursework in English; or submission of TOEFL score.

VURP mentors must be tenured or tenure-track Caltech faculty.

Faculty are discouraged from working with international students who are under 18 years of age through this program. Applications from an international student who is under 18 years of age will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Program Details

Students will not be eligible to enroll in regular undergraduate courses, receive course credit, or a transcript from Caltech. Students may not audit Caltech courses. Students will be considered enrolled full-time in the VURP program.

Students can only do research at Caltech in Pasadena. This program does not allow students to conduct research at JPL or at Caltech off-site facilities.

Students must complete a minimum of 10 weeks of research and a maximum of 24 weeks. If a student is doing a SURF and extending into VURP, the total amount of time they can be in both programs is 24 weeks.

If accepted, students will need to show proof of health insurance for the duration of their stay. Insurance must cover routine, urgent, and emergency care.

Funding, Travel, and Housing

VURP students starting in 2022 will receive a \$684/weekly stipend. Funding can come from the faculty mentor's contracts and/or grants; the student's home institution; or a mix of the two. Please note: no "personal" funding will be allowed.

For students who are receiving the full stipend from their home institution, the home institution will also be assessed a 26% administrative fee on the full stipend. This administrative fee is to be paid directly to the Student-Faculty Programs Office.

Students are responsible for travel and housing arrangements and costs.

PLEASE NOTE: Campus housing will ONLY be available between mid-June and mid-August. Students needing housing at other times will need to find their own housing.

Program Start Dates

Start dates will be determined and agreed upon by the student, mentor, AND the Student-Faculty Programs Office. During the academic year, students must start on a Monday and will be required to attend an orientation provided by the SFP office. During the summer period (May through July) students must start on one of the SFP-approved start dates. Please check with the SFP office for details.

Application Procedures

Step 1: Faculty, or their administrative staff, must submit a [VURP request form](#) (NOTE: form can be downloaded through Adobe for a fillable version) to the SFP office at least 10-12 weeks prior to anticipated start date. Start dates should be flexible to accommodate visa and other administrative processes.

Faculty, or a designated co-mentor, should begin working with student to develop a research proposal.

Step 2: The SFP office will then ask the student to submit the following within 2 weeks of request:

- An online application
- A research proposal written by the student with support from their Caltech mentor and/or co-mentor
- Three confidential letters of recommendation from faculty at the student's home institution in the relevant discipline
- An unofficial academic transcript
- A letter from an institutional officer (i.e. a dean or above) at their home institution demonstrating proof of enrollment in an undergraduate program, approval of their time away, and their eligibility to enroll in the academic term following participation. If the home institution is providing financial support, the amount of funding in US dollars should be noted.

Step 3: Once the application is submitted, the Caltech faculty mentor will receive an email message asking for their mentor evaluation of the student's application. This **MUST** be completed to move ahead with the process.

In order for the student and mentor to have a positive research experience, the quality of the application should be what one would expect from a successful SURF applicant.

Step 4: All applications will be reviewed to ensure that the student has the necessary background to undertake the proposed research; that the proposed research is well-thought out and that the student is likely to make sufficient progress toward project goals; and that the mentor has had sufficient interaction with the student about the project and is enthusiastic about working with and providing mentorship to the student.

Step 5: Once the application is reviewed and approved, the SFP office will send a letter of acceptance to the student and notify the faculty mentor and administrative contact. International students will be contacted by Caltech's International Student Programs (ISP) Office to initiate the visa process. ISP will not be able to begin this process until students have been accepted into the VURP program.

Step 6: Once students are admitted, the SFP Office will manage all hiring processes. Student will receive a Caltech ID and IMSS account.

Student Educational Requirements

If accepted into the program, students will need to complete several educational requirements, including:

- Monthly progress reports approved by their mentor
- A final abstract and written technical report approved by their mentor
- A final oral presentation

After successful completion of these requirements, students will receive a certificate of completion.

Faculty Mentor Responsibilities

Faculty mentors agree to:

- oversee supervision of the proposed research and consult with the student at regular and appropriate intervals throughout the project period;
- ensure that student receives all necessary lab and safety training;
- arrange for payment of all research expenses and contributions to the student award;
- not provide student with export controlled information or items;
- be in residence for the majority of the student research period;
- collaborate with student on the preparation of progress reports, final abstract and a written technical report and to approve and sign off on these requirements;

- help the student prepare for the final oral presentation.

Caltech

California Institute of Technology

1200 East California Boulevard
Pasadena, California 91125 