



Dudley
Community

Welcomes you to the Visiting Undergraduate Student Program for Spring 2026!

We are excited for you to join us at Harvard! Below are outlined aspects of life at Harvard College as you prepare to enroll as a Visiting Undergraduate Student (VUS). **Since some policies are specific to the VUS program and may not be available in other Harvard College materials, please reach out to us directly with any questions you may have read the enclosed information carefully, and keep this document somewhere you can refer to later. You may contact the VUS Program Manager at vusprogram@fas.harvard.edu.**

- **A WORD OF CAUTION:** In recent semesters students have increasingly turned to each other, to former VUS, or to the internet/AI for guidance as to what is expected or allowed in terms of classes, orientation, and other matters. As a result, they have often received incorrect information. All information about the VUS Program will come directly from the VUS Program Manager, the Dudley Community Resident Dean, or (for Harvard-wide expectations) Harvard College. Please do not rely on former or current VUS or Harvard College students for advice on course-selection policies or other programmatic expectations and know most VUS-specific information is not available on the internet. If you are ever unclear about what is allowed or expected of you, please reach out to the VUS Program Manager and reference the materials you have received at the time of admission and from the VUS Program Manager. We are always happy to assist you and provide you with official guidance.

We will write with more detailed guidance over the next few months once further details about Spring dates and deadlines are finalized.

As a reminder, the VUS Program is a full-time, primarily academic program within Harvard's Faculty of Arts and Sciences. FAS includes both Harvard College and the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences. Our expectation is that, ordinarily, VUS will be enrolled in three or four 4-credit courses within FAS (12 to 16 total credits) The goal of the VUS program is to provide students from other universities access to the undergraduate liberal arts curriculum at Harvard, and for Harvard undergraduates to learn from the experiences, whether academic, cultural, or personal, of the VUS they share classes with. Therefore, VUS students should plan to take all their courses within FAS. When VUS program rules allow and it would benefit a student's academic program at their home institution, students might gain permission to cross-register into up to one course per term at another Harvard school outside of FAS or at MIT, although many courses offered at other schools are not permissible for VUS enrollment. See "Course Selection" below for further details.

All instruction at Harvard College happens in person, and VUS are expected to be physically present in Cambridge from the move-in day before orientation through the last day of exam period, save for official school breaks and weekends.

POTENTIAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY FOR A LIMITED NUMBER OF SPRING 2026 VUS

The VUS Program may have the opportunity to provide housing to a limited number of Spring 2026 VUS in single occupancy suites with shared hallway bathrooms. We will not know more about whether this opportunity will exist until late October at the earliest and January at latest, and we expect only a limited amount of spots if so. VUS will therefore need to commit to attending the program without knowing whether any potential on-campus housing spots available. Most Spring 2026 VUS will need to secure off-campus housing.

IMPORTANT SPRING '26 VUS DATES:

You will need to arrive in the Cambridge area no later than January 20. You should be available on the day of January 21 to visit campus during business hours to perform required tasks such as picking up your Harvard ID.

Monday, October 27, 9 AM-12 PM: First MANDATORY Virtual Orientation module.

- Note: Harvard's "Crimson Cart" opens on October 22, but there are no tasks VUS must perform until November. For example, registering for courses does not occur until November. We will discuss during virtual orientation on October 27.
- **Monday, October 27, 5 PM EST: Advising Essays Due.**
 - **Instructions will be sent to you October 15**

Tuesday October 28 through November 4: VIRTUAL MEETINGS WITH VUS ADVISERS

- You will need to make an appointment with your assigned VUS adviser to review your courses of interest and discuss meeting the VUS program requirements as well as your home university expectations, and to gain any VUS program permissions that may be required.

November 5: FAS Course Registration Begins. Some courses will be on a first come, first served basis

November 19: FAS COURSE REGISTRATION CLOSES

- Changes remain possible but only during the "add drop" period in late January/February. Functionally, you should be fully enrolled in a minimum course load of 3 full time (4 credit) and maximum of 4 full time (4 credit) courses within FAS on this date which you can indeed matriculate into. Other schools, e.g. for cross-registration, have course registration periods much later so plan to take all courses at FAS.

Monday, January 19: Federal Holiday. All Staff Offices Closed. No classes.

Tuesday, January 20: LATEST DAY TO ARRIVE IN CAMBRIDGE/BOSTON

- You will need to undertake tasks such as picking up your HUID on this date
- For students in on-campus housing, a MANDATORY meeting will be held the evening of Wednesday January 21. Details forthcoming.

Thursday, January 22, 8:30 AM-5 PM: Attend MANDATORY In-person Orientation.

- This will be held on campus. All VUS, NEW AND RETURNING, must attend all sessions in order to matriculate for Spring 2026. Do not plan other activities during the orientation session.

Monday, January 26: First Day of Classes

DUDLEY COMMUNITY

The Dudley Community is part of the “House” system at Harvard College, and is your connection to the academic, advising, and community events of the Visiting Undergraduate Student Program. In addition to serving the VUS community, Dudley is also comprised of off-campus undergraduates and undergraduate students living in the Dudley Cooperative. You will receive your academic advising through Dudley—all of the academic advisers for the Visiting Undergraduate Students are Tutors in the Dudley Community. As the community center for the VUS program, Dudley also seeks to provide information that will help with your transition to Harvard. At Orientation you will meet Dudley staff and students and receive further information about how we are available to support you as you study at Harvard.

We are excited to welcome you to Harvard, and want to let you know what you can expect from the VUS Program and the Dudley Community:

- The VUS Program will provide you with a detailed Orientation to Harvard. This will include an introduction to Harvard’s academic culture, how Harvard’s policies apply to VUS, and how to navigate course selection and the many resources Harvard offers.
- Dudley will build a sense of community amongst the Spring 2026 VUS class.
- Dudley will build community between VUS and Harvard College students. You will have the opportunity to connect with Dudley Community students at Harvard, as well as with other Harvard undergraduates from many areas of study and the many other “Houses.”
- We will provide several social events for VUS over the term to foster meaningful social contact with Harvard students.
- Personalized academic advising: Our advisers meet with you and check in with you many times throughout the semester. At the beginning of the term your adviser will be in touch before classes begin to learn about your background, your studies at your home institution, and your goals during your time at Harvard. Then, they will guide you as you navigate course selection at Harvard—which is unique in many respects. During the term, you will come to know each other well; Your academic advisers remain committed to supporting your success in and out of the classroom and work to ensure you have all the support you need to do your best work.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ENROLLMENT

As a condition of enrollment in the program you will be required to:

- Complete all **mandatory orientation sessions** to introduce you to the VUS program and Harvard College.
- Complete an advising essay and propose a course list **by October 27**.
- Complete a required online training module about Title IX resources at Harvard College in a timely fashion (this will be sent to you prior to the beginning of term).
- Complete a review of the Harvard College Honor Code and an Honor Code reflection (this will be sent to you prior to the beginning of the term).
- Attend a required “extended orientation” during the second week of classes (date and format to be sent later). Only students with direct academic conflicts (an official lecture, lab, or section meeting time) will be excused.
- Join us for an all-VUS lunch mid-semester (only direct academic conflicts will be excused).

- Join us for a celebratory farewell event for all VUS near the end of the academic term (only direct academic conflicts will be excused).
- Thoroughly read all emails that come from VUS program staff and reply when requested. Add vusprogram@fas.harvard.edu, dudleycommunitydean@fas.harvard.edu, and ududley@fas.harvard.edu to your email filters to ensure to receive and prioritize these emails.
- Students who will have or require an active visa status MUST perform all tasks asked of them by the Harvard International Office (HIO). Further details will follow. Ordinarily this includes a mandatory meeting with an HIO adviser, as well as an additional orientation session specific to visa questions.
- Complete all [immunization requirements](#) (scroll down and choose Harvard College) for the State of Massachusetts as well as for Harvard – you can receive these on campus but will need them completed to begin classes. Uploaded immunization documents can take several weeks to be processed. Medical waivers should be addressed with Harvard University Health Services.
- Pay tuition and fees and complete all financial paperwork before classes begin, see dates specified by Student Financial Services. Take note that international wire transfers take several days or more and need to be completed before deadlines in order to access Harvard systems.
- Connect with [Disability Access Office](#) as early as possible, ideally by November 1, if you might need housing or academic accommodations to start their process to increase the likelihood approved accommodations could be in place before classes begin.

ORIENTATION AND REGISTRATION

The exact times and format of all orientation modules will be announced over the summer.

****COMPLETION OF ALL ORIENTATION MODULES (both virtual and in person) IS MANDATORY. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS. YOU MUST COMPLETE ORIENTATION IF YOU INTEND TO ENROLL AT HARVARD FOR THE TERM.****

During Orientation, you will receive detailed information about topics such as course selection and registration, campus life, Harvard community expectations, and the academic culture of Harvard. Orientation will also provide an opportunity to meet and socialize with your fellow Visiting Students, academic dean, and academic advisers.

Please note we will have an initial “virtual” Orientation on October 27 to give you everything you need to know regarding the mechanics of course selection and registration well ahead of the registration deadline. This will be followed by an “all-day” in-person Orientation on January 22 which is a more detailed orientation to Harvard generally, a more in-depth reminder of course selection rules, and a detailed account of VUS-specific policies.

COURSE SELECTION

Although you have submitted tentative course selections with your application and will again in your advising essay, **you are not enrolled in or reserved for these courses.**

Before you finalize your course selection, you will meet with your adviser, discuss your academic goals, and identify courses you are interested in.

Your academic adviser will be required to approve your initial course plan, which must be formally confirmed through the “Crimson Cart” feature of Harvard’s online course selection tool, <https://my.harvard.edu/>. You must have an approved set of courses of 12 to 16 credits formally submitted through my.harvard by the course registration deadline **November 19**. Rest assured, we will fully discuss

course registration at Orientation well-ahead of all applicable deadlines. After you are enrolled in your courses in my.harvard, then you can work with your home institution to review them for credit.

VUS are expected to take their courses in the Faculty of Arts and Science (FAS) or School of Engineering and Applied Sciences (SEAS). In rare cases when VUS program guidelines permit and it would benefit a student's program at their home institution, "cross-registration" into no more than one course per term at either other schools at Harvard (such as the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard Graduate School of Education) or at Massachusetts Institute of Technology may be considered upon approval by VUS Program staff. More details on this process is forthcoming during Orientation. Please take careful note that Harvard Business School and Harvard Medical School enrollments are not permitted, and enrollments into Harvard Law School, Harvard Graduate School of Design, and Harvard School of Public Health are rarely approved owing to the structure of these courses and the difference between US undergraduate liberal arts curricula that the VUS program is designed to provide and the curricula in these professional schools. Furthermore, consider that the the deadlines for enrolling in these courses are much later than in FAS/SEAS as you determine your timeline for receiving credit approval from your home institution for your courses. We recommend against counting on any cross-registered course admittance to fulfill degree requirements. Further details regarding cross-registration will be sent to you before the term begins. You are expected to be students of the FAS academic community (the division within which Harvard College is located) first and foremost.

VUS are limited to enrollment in no more than one research-based course per term. VUS ordinarily may not enroll in tutorials, independent study courses, or thesis supervision.

As you make your academic plans, be aware that even for Harvard degree candidates, many students do not gain entry to courses they are interested in and academically qualified for. Many courses have limited enrollment and priority access for some courses is granted first to Harvard degree candidates and/or students studying certain fields (usually in courses with limited enrollment, seminars, upper division "200" level courses, or others designated as primarily for graduate students). Courses listed primarily for graduate students should be considered with caution, and enrollment in many courses is left to the professor's discretion. Enrollment in 300- or 3000-level courses is not permitted. Some courses have specific prerequisites that must be met. If you wish to take courses that are sequential, such as mathematics, computer science, engineering, and languages, you need to consult an adviser in that particular department to be appropriately placed.

****Please be aware that we cannot guarantee your admission to any of the specific courses that you listed in your application or that you list in your advising essay.**** Each student should have several alternative courses in mind in case their top choices are not available. Most of the courses in the course catalog listed under Faculty of Arts and Science (FAS) and School of Engineering and Applied Sciences (SEAS) are open to VUS, subject to the limits listed above.

You can access both a public version (<https://courses.my.harvard.edu>) and a version of the course catalog that requires Harvard login and has more detailed information (<https://my.harvard.edu>). Select "course search" at the top of the screen and **be sure to choose Faculty of Arts and Science (FAS) when searching courses** to see the courses typically available for VUS.

(You can view historical offerings here: <https://registrar.fas.harvard.edu/courses-exams/courses-instruction/previous-courses-instruction>).

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Visiting Undergraduate Students are subject to all academic and other regulations in the *Handbook for Students*, **which you must consult before your arrival**: <https://handbook.college.harvard.edu/>. Please note this resource (which is a PDF) is sometimes offline for brief periods during the summer as it is revised and updated before the start of term.

VUS are also subject to and responsible for knowing VUS-specific policies you will receive from Dudley – you should keep these for your reference as they are not available on the internet or to AI. In cases where *Handbook* or other Harvard policies and VUS-specific policies differ, you should consult with the VUS program staff to determine which applies – usually the more conservative policy applies.

You must also consult the Harvard Guide to Using Sources. You will be expected to know this information upon your arrival at Harvard and use it throughout your time with us: <http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/home>.

We would like to remind you that as a Visiting Undergraduate Student, you are enrolled in a non-degree program and therefore are not a candidate for any degree or alumni status at Harvard. The VUS program will not provide a program certificate nor will it hold onto student files or letters of recommendation after your term of study with us is over. You will have access to a transcript that will serve as proof of enrollment at Harvard College.

FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

Unless you have chosen to pay your term bill by the installment plan, the entire balance must be paid before you will be allowed to enroll in classes.

Your tuition is based entirely on the number of courses/credits you have elected to take. *This tuition rate is cited in your letter of admission and is subject to change if you increase or decrease your course load.* If you elect to reduce your course load, you will still need to pay the amount listed on your admission letter, but you will be refunded the difference after the final deadline for course enrollment and adjustments has passed later in the term. If you increase your course load, you will be required to pay the additional rate for the courses you select. **Please note that ordinarily VUS students complete a full-time course load of 3 to 4 courses, and that international students must take at least 3 courses (at least 12 credits) to satisfy U.S. immigration requirements.**

Financial Aid from Harvard College is not available for Visiting Undergraduate Students. Emergency funding from Harvard College is not available for Visiting Undergraduate Students.

Questions about your bill may be directed to Student Financial Services (<http://sfs.harvard.edu/>). You may contact them at (617) 495-2739 or student_billing@harvard.edu.

HOUSING

As the majority of VUS will need to secure off-campus housing, we urge students to begin an apartment search immediately. It is sometimes challenging to secure housing in the Boston area, which tends to follow a year-long lease cycle for rentals which begins on September 1. Often such apartments are secured by early spring. Therefore, begin your housing search in earnest immediately.

Harvard College is located in Cambridge, MA and is adjacent to Boston. However, the Boston area is unique in that there are several towns and neighborhoods which are close to campus. The most convenient are arguably Cambridge, Somerville, Boston (especially the Allston neighborhood), and Watertown. However, your commute time to campus cannot be predicted merely by the town. You should consult the

[MBTA website](#) (which is Boston’s public transit system of buses, subways, and trains) and/or use [Google Maps](#) to plan out how far away from campus your commute will be by walking, transit, or cycling. Most students do not drive cars to campus because parking in Harvard Square is time-consuming and can be costly. Most students use public transit, walk to campus, or ride bicycles.

The Admitted Students Page contains an off-campus resource guide which we hope will be helpful in your housing search. In the past some websites Visiting Undergraduate Students have found helpful have been: <http://boston.craigslist.org>, and <http://www.sublet.com/>, <https://www.theblueground.com/> as well as Facebook groups for housing (these often have descriptive names such as “Harvard MIT Cambridge Housing: Apartments, Rooms, Sublets” . However, none of the listings in these publications are supported or approved by Harvard College. We encourage you to read all leases and contracts carefully and understand your obligations and expectations before signing or sending money. We are unable to mediate roommate or landlord disputes for off-campus students.

****Be aware that some postings for housing online are run by scam artists. Use caution and protect yourself from being duped out of money. Report all crimes to the Harvard University Police Department (617) 495-1212.****

It is important that you secure housing before the beginning of the term. *Be prepared to invest significant time and effort in your housing search.* Incoming Visiting Undergraduate Students often find it helpful to search for apartments together and to share accommodations. To help you connect with potential roommates, the VUS Program Manager will provide contact information for other enrolling Visiting Undergraduate Students by late-November at the latest. Please note that apartments in Boston (and the United States generally) typically come unfurnished and utility costs are not commonly included in the rent. Thus, one should budget money and time to buy furniture and pay additional utilities (heat, electricity, Wi-Fi).

CALENDAR AND EXAMINATIONS

Harvard’s academic calendar runs later than many colleges. We cannot make adjustments to our examination schedule, and you should plan to be near campus through the last day of exams. You must take your final exams in-person, as scheduled. The examination period for the Spring 2026 term begins on May 7, 2026 and ends May 16, 2026. Please be aware that Harvard holds to this policy even for conflicts with academic obligations you may have at your home institution – if any conflicts arise, be in touch with the Dudley Resident Dean well in advance to learn Harvard’s policies and explore if there are any possibilities for resolution.

For more information about the Harvard academic calendar and exam expectations, we refer you to the “Academic Calendar” section of the [Handbook for Students](#). Other important information about course schedules and exam procedures will be reviewed during the Visiting Undergraduate Student Orientation and via emails over the term.

HEALTH SERVICES

Every registered student is automatically enrolled in the University Student Health and Insurance Plan (SHIP). The Blue Cross/Blue Shield insurance premium for this plan must be paid by all students, as well as the tuition charge and administrative fee, unless a waiver form indicating coverage by another insurance policy is submitted. When the waiver is approved, a credit will be entered on your final bill.

VUS students are not able to waive the health care fees unless the insurance policy is based in the United States and meets certain coverage requirements (as stipulated by the state of Massachusetts). For example, international students may have insurance based in their home country that would typically cover costs

incurred while in the US, but this would not meet the guidelines required by Massachusetts law, and so enrolling in SHIP would be required. Students in the VUS program are strongly encouraged to verify insurance coverage directly with their provider if they travel away from campus to ensure their insurance coverage is adequate for their proposed travel. Please **Contact Member Services with questions about plan coverage or waiving the insurance:** <https://hushp.harvard.edu/>

Separate from SHIP, all students at Harvard College are required to pay the Student Health Fee, which covers health services provided on campus by the Harvard University Health Services (HUHS) providers. This fee ensures all undergraduate students can use physical and mental health basic services on campus regardless of the health insurance they carry. This fee also supports costs for programming including but not limited to workshops, substance abuse education, and peer counseling.

ACCOMODATIONS FOR DISABILTIES OR HEALTH CONDITIONS

If you anticipate needing personal accommodations on the basis of a disability or other health condition(s) please register with the Disability Access Office (DAO) (<https://dao.fas.harvard.edu/>) As far as possible in advance of the term. Accommodations can take time to implement and are more challenging to put in place later. Many students find that the rigor of Harvard is easier to tackle with accommodations in place for disabilities or other health conditions. You are encouraged to register for accommodations for any diagnoses you may have even if you have not used them at your home university.

While you are welcome to reach out to the DAO at any time, we urge you to reach out to the DAO immediately if you anticipate needing accommodations in time for the start of term.

Even if you do not have formal accommodations at your home university, we urge you to register with Harvard's DAO if you received exceptions or extensions owing to issues related to your physical or emotional well-being in the past.

END OF ENROLLMENT

For VUS, your enrollment and access to Harvard resources is linked to your student-status, which expires the day after the last day of final exams. For Spring students, this is May 17, 2026, after the last day of final examinations.

USE OF HARVARD RESOURCES ONCE ENROLLMENT ENDS

We send further information about e-mail access and other resources near the end of the term, but once your enrollment in the program ends you must stop your use of Harvard resources as you are no longer an enrolled Harvard student, regardless of whether your HUID or Harvard key may continue to provide access to these for a short time.

Once your enrollment in the Program ends you are welcome to pursue travel and other activities permitted by your current visa status. **If you are on a visa, once your program ends, you cannot work in an on-campus job at Harvard.** You can, however, work with your Harvard International Office advisor to discuss various options available to you based on your immigration status.

Please note that VUS are not eligible for Harvard sponsorship for OPT or CPT. Further details can be found on the Admitted Students Page.

INFORMATION ON SCAMS

Recently, a scam targeted Harvard University Email addresses with the promise of free musical instruments. We have also seen scams targeting students by posing as law enforcement in or consulates for other countries, and scams offering jobs or housing to students. The Harvard University Police Department sent out a helpful email with information on various types of scams as well as resources, which you can access here: <https://www.hupd.harvard.edu/news/2024/12/campus-advisory-scam-targeting-harvard-university-affiliates>

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions regarding the Admissions process or visa-related concerns, please contact the VUS Admissions Coordinator at the Office of Visiting Undergraduate Student Admissions at adm-vus@fas.harvard.edu.

For general questions regarding Harvard College policies, and schedules, please contact the Visiting Undergraduate Student Program Manager at vusprogram@fas.harvard.edu.

We look forward to meeting you soon and welcoming you to Harvard!