

To: Admitted Visiting Undergraduate Students

Re: Welcome to Harvard College Visiting Undergraduate Students (VUS) Program

Congratulations on your admission to Harvard College Visiting Undergraduate Students (VUS) Program. We are excited for you to join us at Harvard. Please read the enclosed information carefully and keep this memo so you may refer to it later. If you are unclear about any policies or have other questions, please reach out to the VUS Program at vusprogram@fas.harvard.edu, or to your individual advisor once they are assigned. We are always happy to assist you.

ABOUT HARVARD COLLEGE VISITING UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS PROGRAM

The VUS Program is a full-time, primarily academic program within Harvard's Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS). FAS includes both Harvard College and the John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, as well as the Kenneth C. Griffin Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and the Division of Continuing Education. The goal of the VUS Program at Harvard College is to provide students from other universities access to the undergraduate liberal arts curriculum at Harvard, and for Harvard undergraduates to learn from the various experiences of VUS with whom they share classes. Ordinarily, Visiting Undergraduate Students will be enrolled in three or four 4-credit FAS courses (12 or 16 credits).

All instruction at Harvard College happens in person. Visiting Undergraduate Students will arrive in the Cambridge area no later than **Tuesday, January 19, 2027** and are expected to be physically present through the last day of exam period, save for official school breaks and weekends.

- **Orientation:** Virtual and In-Person Orientation introduces you to Harvard life and academics and is a required component of your enrollment at Harvard. You will learn about the values of the Harvard community and the opportunities and responsibilities associated with being a member. It is a time to meet peers and advisers, and consider how to explore and pursue your intellectual and personal interests.
- **Individualized academic advising:** For the 2026-27 academic year, Visiting Undergraduate Students are advised and supported by VUS Tutors serving as individual academic advisers, and the Interim Assistant Dean serving as the Resident Dean for VUS. Your adviser will be in touch with you 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. Advisers meet with you and check in with you many times throughout the semester. 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.
- **Social events:** The Program seeks to facilitate meaningful social interactions meant to enhance Visiting Undergraduate Student experiences.

IMPORTANT DATES FOR SPRING 2027

Wednesday, October 21, 2026: Spring 2027 FAS Crimson Cart opens
 Monday, October 26, 2026: Required Virtual Orientation, 9:00 AM-12:00 PM and Advising Survey due
 Wednesday, November 4, 2026: Spring 2027 Course Registration Begins
 Wednesday, November 18, 2026: Spring 2027 Course Registration Deadline
 Monday, January 18, 2027: Federal Holiday. Administrative offices closed. No classes.
 Tuesday, January 19, 2027: Latest day to arrive in Boston/Cambridge
 Tuesday, January 19–Wednesday, January 20, 2027: Pick up HUID
 Thursday, January 21, 2027: Required In-Person Spring Orientation, 8:30 AM-5:00 PM
 Monday, January 25, 2027: First Day of Spring Classes

REQUIREMENTS FOR ENROLLMENT

As a condition of enrollment in the Program students are required to:

- Complete an advising survey by **Monday, October 26, 2026** and attend all required orientation sessions to introduce you to the VUS Program and Harvard College.
- Complete a required online training module about Title IX resources at Harvard College.
- Complete a review of the Harvard College Honor Code and an Honor Code reflection essay.
- Join us for an all-VUS lunch mid-semester and a celebratory farewell event for all VUS near the end of the academic term.
- Thoroughly read all emails from VUS Program staff and reply promptly when requested. Add vusprogram@fas.harvard.edu to your email filters and prioritize these emails and timely communication.
- Complete all [immunization requirements](#) for the State of Massachusetts and Harvard College prior to the beginning of classes. Please note that immunization verification can take a minimum of 10–15 business days to process and clear for registration.
- Pay tuition and fees and complete all financial paperwork as directed by [Student Financial Services](#).
- Students requiring a Harvard-sponsored visa must perform all tasks asked of them by the Harvard International Office (HIO). Further details will come from Admissions or HIO directly.

COURSE SELECTION AND REGISTRATION

Spring 2027 course registration takes place Wednesday, November 4–Wednesday, November 18, 2026. The required Virtual Orientation on Monday, October 26, 2026, 9:00 AM-12:00 PM provides guidance to support course selection and registration. Before you enroll you will also meet with your adviser to discuss your courses and academic goals. Visiting Undergraduate Students are expected to be students of the FAS academic community first and foremost. Ordinarily, the Program does not permit students to be enrolled in

1. less than three FAS courses
2. more than one graduate level course
3. more than one cross-registered course
4. more than one research course
5. more than four courses
6. tutorials, independent study courses, or thesis supervision
7. 300-level or 3000-level courses

You can access both a public version of the course catalog (<https://courses.my.harvard.edu>) and a version requiring HarvardKey credentials (<https://my.harvard.edu>). As you make your academic plans, keep in mind that many courses have limited enrollment and may require instructor permission to enroll. Students should have several alternative courses in mind in case their top choices are not available. For information about cross-registration please review the [cross-registration guide for FAS students](#). You should be enrolled in at least three courses or 12 credits in FAS by **Wednesday, November 18, 2026**.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Visiting Undergraduate Students are subject to all academic and other regulations contained in the [Student Handbook](#), available online at <https://handbook.college.harvard.edu>. Please familiarize yourself with the Handbook before you arrive and be prepared to consult it as needed. VUS are also subject to and responsible for knowing VUS-specific policies. In cases where other Harvard policies and VUS policies may differ, VUS should consult with the Program to determine which applies—usually, the more conservative policy. You must also be familiar with the *Harvard Guide to Using Sources* available online at <http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu>. You will be expected to consult this guide upon your arrival at Harvard and use it throughout your time with us.

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 retain 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.

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 final examination period for the Spring 2027 term is Thursday, May 6 through Saturday, May 15, 2027. 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 VUS Assistant Dean well in advance to learn Harvard's policies and explore options for resolution. For more information about the Harvard academic calendar and exam expectations, we refer you to the [“Reading Period”](#) section of the [Student Handbook](#). Other important information about course schedules and exam procedures will be reviewed during Orientation and via emails over the term.

STUDENT FINANCIAL SERVICES (SFS)

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 VUS ordinarily complete a full-time course load of three or four 4-credit courses, and international students must take at least three courses or 12 credits to satisfy US 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](#). You may contact them at (617) 495-2739 or student_billing@harvard.edu.

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, 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 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.

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.

DISABILITY ACCESS OFFICE (DAO)

If you anticipate needing personal accommodations on the basis of a disability or other health condition please register with the Disability Access Office (DAO) at <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. While you are welcome to reach out to the DAO at any time, we urge you to reach out 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.

HOUSING

As 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/Brighton neighborhood), and Watertown. However, your commute time to campus cannot be predicted merely by the town. You should consult the [MBTA website](#) (MBTA 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, public 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. Some websites Visiting Undergraduate Students have found helpful include <http://boston.craigslist.org>, <http://www.sublet.com>, and <https://www.theblueground.com>, as well as Facebook groups for housing. These often have descriptive names such as "[Harvard MIT Cambridge Housing, Rooms, Apartments, Sublets & Roommates](#)." 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. 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. Please note that apartments in Boston 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).

END OF ENROLLMENT AND USE OF HARVARD RESOURCES ONCE ENROLLMENT ENDS

Your access to Harvard resources is linked to your status as an enrolled student, which expires the day after the last day of final exams. For Spring, this is Sunday, May 16, 2027. We send further information about e-mail access and other resources near the end of the term. Once your program ends you must stop your use of Harvard resources as you are no longer an enrolled Harvard student.

If you are on a visa, once your program ends, you cannot work in an on-campus job at Harvard. At that point, you are welcome to pursue travel and other activities permitted by your current visa status. You can work with your HIO advisor to understand 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

Recent scams have targeted students by posing as law enforcement or consulates for other countries, or offering jobs or housing to students, some even posing as Harvard faculty. The Harvard University Police Department sent out a helpful email with information on various types of scams as well as resources, which you may access here: [Campus Advisory–Scam Targeting Harvard University Affiliates](#).

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions regarding the Admissions process or visa-related concerns, please contact Visiting Undergraduate Student Admissions at adm-vus@fas.harvard.edu. For general questions regarding Harvard College policies and schedules, please contact the VUS Program at vusprogram@fas.harvard.edu. We look forward to meeting you soon and welcoming you to Harvard.