CSAIL Policy for Visitors and Affiliates  
(November 2007)

This document outlines CSAIL policy concerning “transient” CSAIL members.¹ For three of the categories, the policy is consistent with MIT policy, but it includes some augmentations that will lend further clarity. In addition, we define two other categories for circumstances that may be unique to CSAIL.

1. Visiting Engineer, Visiting Scientist, and Visiting Scholar

The official Institute policy states that:

Visiting Engineer, Visiting Scientist, and Visiting Scholar titles designate visitors working at MIT for a specified period from one week to one year. The specific title, always preceded by “visiting,” should reflect the actual duties of the visitor. A visiting engineer, scientist, or other similarly titled appointee is primarily occupied with research in the field indicated. Incumbents are not accorded principal investigator status and do not normally receive consulting privileges.

Visiting appointments are academic appointments; they may be full or part time, salaried or unsalaried. Appointments are made to academic departments or laboratories/centers with approval of the department head or laboratory/center director. If an appointee receives a salary paid by MIT, funding responsibility resides with the department or laboratory/center that is the locus of the appointment. Since appointments to this rank are by definition temporary, visitors are not eligible for staff benefits, except that those with salaried appointments of 50 percent or more time and of at least three months’ duration are eligible for any of the health insurance plans, the Tax-Deferred Annuity Plan, the Flexible Reimbursement Account Plan (FRAP), and before-tax premium payments. Certain visitors are required to participate in the Affiliate Health Program (see Section 7.4.3). Consult the International Scholars Office for more information on international visitors.

For CSAIL, the Institute policy is further augmented as follows:

1. All visitor appointments must have prior written approval of the CSAIL Director or his/her designee. Requests for such appointments should be made at least four months prior to the contemplated arrival date for foreign visitors and two months for domestic visitors. In the case where the visitor will receive financial support, the source of such support must be identified and in the request.

¹ There are five categories of regular employees at CSAIL: faculty, research staff, students (mostly graduate students, but may include undergraduates as UROPs), postdoctorals, and administrative/technical staff. These categories are well stipulated by the Institute, and CSAIL policy for their employment is not the subject of this document.
2. The duration of the visit can range from one month to one year. These appointments are typically not renewable.
3. The visitor will be allocated (enclosed) office space based on the prevailing CSAIL regulations, depending on rank and space availability.

2. Visiting Students

The official Institute policy states that:

Students who are pursuing an undergraduate or graduate degree at an institution of higher education other than MIT and have been invited by an MIT department or laboratory/center to do research in their fields of study may apply for visiting student status. Current MIT regular or special students, or MIT students who have withdrawn or are on a leave of absence, cannot apply for visiting student status. The International Students Office handles visiting student applications (including those from US citizens) and can be consulted for more information.

**Registration:** Visiting students will be registered in Course NIV (Non-Institute Visitors) and will be registered for a research subject NIV.RSCH, which is a variable unit subject. This subject will carry 40 units of credit in the regular term and 25 units in the summer term. The amount of credit will be prorated for students who are present for less than the entire term. Credit for this subject may not be applied toward any academic degree that the student may seek at a later date. The grade VIS will be awarded on completion of the subject. A visiting student who wishes to take academic subjects at MIT will have to apply for a change of status from visiting student to special student. No student can be a visiting student and a special student at the same time. Regular students and special students are not allowed to change to visiting student status.

**Duration of Stay:** Visiting students will be admitted for the period of time specified in the initial invitation letter. However, as with all other students, they have to register each semester. A visiting student who wishes to continue beyond the period initially agreed upon has to submit a letter of approval from the home institution and a letter from the host department or laboratory/center requesting the extension to the International Students Office.

**Medical Service and Hospitalization Insurance:** As is the case for all students at MIT, a visiting student must either purchase MIT hospitalization insurance or provide proof of comparable coverage. International students must have insurance that meets all the requirements specified by the federal regulations for J-1 students.

**Employment:** A visiting student may receive compensation for work done for the host research group. Visiting students are not allowed to have any other form of on-campus employment. International visiting students are not allowed to have any other employment, on-campus or off-campus, under federal regulations.

**Housing:** Visiting students are not entitled to on-campus housing and, in most cases, should plan to find accommodations off campus. However, they may apply for any vacancies that exist in the dormitories after the needs of regular students have been met.
For CSAIL, the Institute policy is further augmented as follows:

1. All visiting appointments must have prior written approval of the CSAIL Director or his/her designee. Requests for such appointments must be made at least four months prior to the contemplated arrival date of the visitor. In the case where the visiting student will receive financial support, the source of such support must be identified in the request.
2. The duration of the visit can typically range from one month to a year. These appointments are typically not renewable.
3. There are many reasons for CSAIL PIs to host visiting students (to enhance collaborations, to recruit future graduate students, outreach, etc.) However, PIs are encouraged to act sensibly and responsibly lest this be viewed as a “back door” entrance to our graduate program.
4. The student will be allocated office space based on the prevailing CSAIL regulations, depending on rank and space availability.

3. Research Affiliates

The official Institute policy states that:

The academic appointment of research affiliate recognizes the status of an individual with whom the Institute wishes to acknowledge some degree of association. Research affiliates characteristically have no specific duties and are typically not in residence. Appointments to this rank are not normally intended to be of long-term or indefinite duration. Appointments are made to academic departments or laboratories/centers with approval of the department head or laboratory/center director. Appointments to this rank are without salary. Research affiliates are not employees of the Institute and do not participate in staff benefits programs.

For CSAIL, the Institute policy is further augmented as follows:

1. All affiliate appointments must have prior written approval of the CSAIL Director or his/her designee. All requests for such appointments must include justifications for the resulting affiliation.
2. The duration of this type of appointment is typically for up to one year. Renewal is not automatic; it requires some demonstration of the benefits of the appointment to CSAIL.
3. Research Affiliates are expected to have primary employment elsewhere, and are not viewed as “permanent” members of CSAIL.
4. Research affiliates are not allocated space at CSAIL.

4. Extended-Stay Research Affiliates

The Extended-Stay Research Affiliates are individuals with whom CSAIL would like to establish a long-term relationship, short of appointing them as regular employees.
1. Appointment to this rank is extremely rare; it requires the approval of the CSAIL Executive Committee. All requests for such appointments must be made by the appropriate Research Directors, and must include justifications for the resulting affiliation.
2. Financial support is not provided for these appointees.
3. The duration of this type of appointment is typically for three years, in some cases subject to an annual MIT renewal approval. The appointment is renewable upon demonstration of the benefits of the appointment to CSAIL.
4. Space allocation for these individuals will be made by the Space Czar, in consultation with the relevant Research Directors.

5. Short-Term Visitors

Sometimes, it is necessary to give short-term (defined as less than one month) CSAIL access to individuals who are unofficial members of the MIT Community (to write joint proposals, to carry out ongoing collaborations, etc.). The MIT Card office will issue these individuals with DLC Sponsored MIT ID cards after receiving an official On-line ID Card Request Form, to be completed by our Administrative Officer or an official designee as appointed by an Administrative Officer.² No HR record will be kept for these individuals. No financial support will be provided, and no office space will be allocated to these short-term visitors.

² Effective 1/1/08, the MIT Card Office will charge sponsoring faculty a $10 fee associated with DLC Sponsored Card Access. This fee must be paid from discretionary resources.