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## MEMORANDUM

DATE: 16 June 2009

TO: Prospective applicants,  
LIGO Laboratory hosts, mentors, and liaisons of visitors  
FROM: LIGO Laboratory Directorate  
SUBJECT: Guidelines for the LIGO Visitors Program  
Refer to: LIGO - M0900168-v1

### ***Purpose:***

LIGO Laboratory has established a LIGO Visitors Program and sets aside certain funds each year to provide participant support for both LIGO scientists and scientists from the broader research community. It serves to extend the base of scientific and engineering expertise in the international community, to engage scientists in related fields who can benefit from and contribute to LIGO's mission, as well as to enrich LIGO Laboratory through the participation of those already deeply engaged in the field. It engenders scientific exchange, learning, mentoring, and training in the field of experimental interferometric gravitational wave astrophysics.

### ***Scope:***

The types of activities supported by the LIGO Visitors Program include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Promotion of scientific interactions between LIGO Laboratory scientists and engineers, those from other gravitational wave efforts, and the broader research community. This includes hosting extended visits (ideally 30 days or longer) by visiting senior researchers who come to one or more of the LIGO Laboratory sites, as well as support for LIGO staff who wish to visit other institutions.
- Furthering the careers of young scientists (postdoctoral scholars) and students, and engaging them in gravitational wave research by enabling them to visit LIGO to conduct LIGO-specific studies related to their research programs or thesis projects.

### ***Principles:***

Granting of support from the LIGO Visitors Program support is guided by the following considerations.

### **Applications to the Visitors Program**

All proposals for visits will be evaluated by the Laboratory's Scientific Staffing Committee, and must include the following elements:

- A proposal outlining in some detail the intended line of research;
- A detailed budget showing the amount of financial support being requested;

- Every visitor to LIGO must arrange for a LIGO Laboratory scientist to serve as local host and liaison for the visit. This person will serve as the applicant's advocate before the Scientific Staffing Committee.
- LIGO staff proposing to visit other institutions engaged in gravitational-wave research must provide a supporting letter from their host indicating his/her concurrence in the proposal and commitment to provide local resources (office, computing, access to labs, etc) to support the planned research.

### **Senior scientists visiting LIGO**

- Senior scientists and engineers (i.e., persons who have completed postdoctoral scholar appointments) may be provided partial support, and typically are expected to provide separate funds from their home institutions. This is the model that is followed, e.g., by sabbatical-granting institutions.
- Visits should be of sufficient duration to enable a significant progress to be accomplished on the proposed research project during the visit. Visits should be longer than 30 days (one month) and should not last more than one year. This is intended to promote a vigorous turnover of visitors and greater scientific exchange.
- In general, multiple or repeat visits extending beyond a cumulative duration of one year are discouraged. However, LIGO Laboratory may accommodate personal constraints that may preclude visitors from staying at LIGO for long periods of time by allowing several visits of shorter duration.
- Visitors are required to provide final reports documenting their findings and the work accomplished during their stay. The reports should be submitted prior to departure.
- Visitors receive appointments as either Visitors to Caltech in the Division of Mathematics, Physics, and Astronomy, Visitors to the MIT Kavli Institute for Astrophysics and Space Research, or as Visitors in LIGO.

### **Student visitors**

- Students in Ph.D degree programs at other institutions and who come to LIGO to continue their studies as part of their degree programs may be supported during their first year on the Visitors Program. Students are accepted as Visiting Student Researchers (VSRs) within the Caltech Graduate School. VSRs are not appointments in the same sense of those described above. Students are expected to bring their own support from their parent institutions; however LIGO may elect to subsidize or augment this support to ensure the VSR is provided with a reasonable level of subsistence during the period of stay at one of the LIGO sites.
- Every VSR must have a LIGO Laboratory mentor who takes primary responsibility for the VSR's research and professional growth during the time of the visit to LIGO.
- Visits extending beyond one year require the commitment of the Laboratory mentor to continue to provide financial support from his or her LIGO budget.