New Student FAQ

Do I need to attend all Orientation events?
Participation in Orientation activities is strongly encouraged. Most academic and administrative activities will take place during the day (between the hours of 9AM and 4PM) and optional social activities will take place each evening and on Friday during the day. Some activities are required (Honor Code, Research Integrity and Institute Policies, and Teaching Assistant Training), and students will be asked to check-in and provide photo identification. For those students who observe Yom Kippur, all efforts have been made to accommodate this in the schedule.

I’m an international student living in the US. Do I need to attend the International Student Orientation?
Yes, International Student Orientation is relevant for all students who do not hold U.S. citizenship, regardless of prior residence. Additional questions can be directed to International Student Programs.

I will be unable to arrive in time to participate in Orientation. What do I need to do?
You will need to notify 1) the Graduate Studies Office, 2) Housing, and 3) your Option Coordinator. When you arrive on campus, you will be expected to attend the next available make-up session for any activities that were required. Information on the make-up dates can be obtained from the Graduate Studies Office.

My start date was earlier than October 1, and I have been enrolled. Do I still need to attend Orientation?
Yes, attendance is expected for all new students who enroll on or after January 1, 2012.

I am a former Caltech undergraduate. Do I need to attend graduate Orientation?
Yes, while many of the practices and policies are the same for graduate students and undergraduate students, there are several aspects that make the graduate school experience unique and attendance at Orientation would be beneficial. At the very least, you would need to participate in the required activities.

When do I complete the I-9 form?
The I-9 form will be completed as part of the check-in process on September 24, 2012. You may complete Section 1 of the I-9 form and bring it with you, but the documentation required for Section 2 must be reviewed for authenticity. Examples of acceptable documents can be found at http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-9.pdf.

What paperwork do I need to bring with me for check-in on September 24, 2012?
All students receiving a check through the Caltech payroll will be expected to provide documentation to verify identity and employment eligibility. Examples of acceptable documents can be found at http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-9.pdf. In addition to the I-9, the Registrar will verify that all required forms have been submitted. If you have not yet submitted the Patent Agreement or Pre-Registration forms, please bring these with you. Health forms can be submitted directly to the Health Center.
Some of the required forms will arrive later than the deadlines. Will I still be able to enroll? Required documents include the Health form, Patent Agreement, a W-4 for US citizens and permanent residents, final transcripts from previous schools attended, and the Pre-Registration form. Late submission of any of these forms will not prevent enrollment. However, it is expected that the forms will be completed and submitted no later than the first week of classes. The Registrar will make a note of the missing documents in your record and enrollment for subsequent terms may be affected if there are still outstanding forms.

I have certain dietary restrictions (vegetarian, vegan, religious dietary practices, gluten-free, medical and food allergies, etc.). Who should I notify? All meals will include vegetarian and vegan options, and every effort will be made to accommodate additional dietary restrictions. Please send an email to gradofc@caltech.edu indicating any dietary restrictions.

Yom Kippur begins on sunset on September 25th and ends on sunset on September 26th. How are religious observances recognized during Orientation? Caltech encourages all members of our community, including students, to observe their religious traditions and holidays. This includes Yom Kippur. Orientation events will continue - as will Institute business - throughout orientation week, but we will make every effort to provide students with information they may have missed. Students observing a religious holiday are not required to attend orientation events on Yom Kippur.

I have a spouse/partner/child that will be joining me during Orientation. Will they be able to participate? Most of the orientation events are open to the partners and families of our incoming students. These include meals, information sessions and social events.

My address or phone number has changed. How do I update Caltech? All students should have received information regarding access.caltech. This portal will allow you to update your contact information and access your academic record. If you have not received instructions on setting up a username and password, please send an email to regis@caltech.edu.