



December 2, 2025

Dear Graduate Students:

The USC Wrigley Institute for Environment and Sustainability is pleased to announce the availability of **Visiting Graduate Researcher** openings during Summer 2026 at the Wrigley Marine Science Center (WMSC) on Catalina Island.

The purpose of the Wrigley Institute Visiting Graduate Researcher program is to enhance graduate student research towards a degree in environmental, marine, and/or sustainability themes. These opportunities are available to graduate students who are currently enrolled in a Master's or Ph.D. program during the research period and who have a need to conduct research in 2026 at the WMSC or at other locations around Catalina Island, CA.

Successful applicants receive free shared graduate student housing, free transportation to and from the island on the USC vessel as available, and waived facility and day use fees. All other WMSC resources, such as lab space, boats, scuba, vehicles, and similar services, are available subject to availability at [2026 Visiting Graduate Researcher rates](#). Additional details below.

Priority deadline: February 6, 2026.

Applications will be considered on a limited basis after this date based on availability. **(NOTE: Housing is VERY limited at WMSC each summer! Applicants are encouraged to apply by the priority deadline.)**

PROGRAM GUIDELINES:

1. Funding for Wrigley Institute Visiting Graduate Researchers is aimed at graduate students who have a need to conduct their research at the USC Wrigley Marine Science Center, or in and around Catalina Island, and are enrolled as full-time graduate students through Summer 2026.
2. Each Visiting Graduate Researcher will receive free boat transportation to and from WMSC on the USC vessel during regular operating days, waived day use and facility fees, and free shared graduate student housing.
3. Graduate students may rent laboratory space with basic research equipment, vehicles to visit off-campus research sites, and waterfront resources such as small boats, scuba tanks, and gear rentals at the applicable rates.
4. Cooking facilities are available in the provided housing. Each student is responsible for providing their own food; meals in the WMSC Dining Hall may also be purchased.
5. Essential research support people (e.g., dive buddies) may be accommodated as space allows. Housing and meals for dive buddies or other research support persons, along with any applicable scuba air fill fees or related charges, will be billed at the applicable rates.



6. Students and their dive buddies are encouraged to bring their own dive gear. A limited number of gear rentals may be available with advance reservation and are subject to availability.
7. Students and their faculty advisors must provide a statement agreeing to cover all additional costs incurred during their stay at WMSC.
8. Visiting Graduate Researchers will be required to participate in a pre-summer orientation, in-person strongly preferred. This orientation is tentatively planned for April 2026; more information will be provided upon acceptance to the program.
9. Visiting Graduate Researchers will be invited to hone their outreach skills through a variety of options throughout the summer. These may include: a) contributing to the Wrigley Institute research blog; b) engagement with the institute's communications team; c) public research talks and/or posters for the WMSC community; d) interaction with WMSC undergraduates (i.e., grad school panels, Q&A sessions); and/or other opportunities as may arise.
10. Upon completion of the summer, each Visiting Graduate Researcher will be required to submit a 2-page close-out report of their summer research activities and a thank you letter to our donors. This report must include at least one high-resolution image of the student conducting research.

APPLICATION MATERIALS:

To apply, please [submit the following materials HERE](#). Priority deadline is February 6, 2026.

- (A) A maximum of a three-page document that includes the following sections:
- Research summary and summer 2026 goals
 - Appropriateness of conducting this work on Catalina
 - Research significance and impact
 - Tentative dates you hope to visit WMSC (if flexible, please share those details)
 - Tentative research space and/or equipment needed while at WMSC
 - A brief bio about yourself (200 words max)

Current headshot – please pick a photo that shows your face (i.e., no sunglasses or hat)

- (B) A letter of support from your faculty advisor, to be [submitted separately by the application deadline HERE](#). Letter must include a statement confirming that all additional costs incurred while at WMSC will be covered.

Please direct questions to: Dr. Jessica Dutton (jmdutton@usc.edu, Wrigley Institute Executive Director) and/or Dr. John Heidelberg (jheidelb@usc.edu, Wrigley Marine Science Center Director). Preference may be given to returning graduate student researchers and those involved in ongoing Wrigley Institute programs.

We look forward to working with you on Catalina Island in 2026!