

OIST Guidelines for Student Travel



Table of Contents

[General Guidelines of Student Travel](#)

[1. Conference & Workshop Travel](#)

[2. Educational Institution Visit Travel](#)



OIST Graduate School

General Guidelines of Student Travel

The following guidelines are based on OIST's travel expense regulations (PRP CH29) and relevant Graduate School policies. For any matters not addressed in these guidelines, please refer to PRP CH29.

- These guidelines define financial assistance and/or travel support provided by the OIST Graduate School to OIST PhD Students, to assist with "2 Travel Support" under Student Support Policies.
- The Graduate School provides support only to students, not their traveling companions.

The Graduate School provides travel support for only the first five years of enrolment in the PhD program. The Graduate School does not provide travel support to students who are taking non-study leave, childbirth accommodation, and external internship leave. The Graduate School travel support is available during each *corresponding* academic year (relevant to the students' start date).

Enrolment Month	May (Early Enrolment)	September (Regular Enrolment)	January (Late Enrolment)
Academic Year	May-April	September-August	January-December

- There is a limit on the number of travel support grants given per year, per travel category. If unused, these grants do not carry over to the following year.
Applications for travel support must be made through the "Business Travel Form" **ONLY IF you have your valid passport and residence card** to re-enter Japan on the way back from your travel. Applications are assessed using a variety of criteria, including the contents of the application, the timing of the event, and the student's academic status and progress. If travel is requested during terms when the student is enrolled in courses, the student is responsible for obtaining permission from their lab supervisor(s) and/or course coordinator(s) for this absence and for making appropriate arrangements to cover all missed classes and absence from the lab.
- When travel coincides with examination arrangement, travel support may be approved *conditionally*. Further information should be sought from the Academic Affairs Section and the [Leave Policy](#).
- If a student makes any changes to the itinerary for personal reasons after the purchase of flight tickets, the student is responsible for any cancellation fees, change fees or any other additional costs.
- Stopovers at any city during transit and open-jaw tickets are not permitted in principle. A stopover refers to staying for 24 hours or more at a reasonable transfer point on the way to a destination. An open-jaw ticket is an airline return ticket where the destination and/or the origin are not the same in both directions.
- OIST does not pay for any expenses or costs related to personal stays, or any incremental expenses incurred through non-OIST related activities.
- Students are reimbursed travel costs only after the travel has concluded.
- Students are responsible for reporting any financial support provided by any organization other than OIST to the Graduate School without concealment or deception. When a student receives a travel grant from an organizer of the event the student plans to attend, this travel grant must be used to support their travel costs.
- Expenses incurred in foreign currencies are reimbursed in Japanese Yen (JPY). The currency conversion rate is set monthly by the OIST Financial Management Division.
- To minimize risks and be most cost-effective, OIST has appointed preferred travel agencies (PTA).
Other than to obtain quotations, students should not contact PTAs directly unless the Graduate School directs them to do so. After travel has been approved and arranged, under no circumstances shall students modify travel arrangements, tickets or itinerary without the Graduate School's prior approval.

1. Conference & Workshop Travel

- The Graduate School provides financial assistance to OIST PhD Students who wish to attend scientific conferences or workshops.
- Conference & Workshop Travel funding is generally awarded only to students taking an active part in the event. **A presentation is required to attend a conference.** Presentations about research completed at OIST will receive precedence over others.

[Application]

- Students may receive Graduate School funding to attend a conference or a workshop **once per academic year** (see General Guidelines). The start date of the intended conference or workshop travel should be ON or AFTER the first day of each academic year.
- **A Business Travel Form** must be submitted **at least THREE months prior** to the departure date of the conference or workshop travel, **even if an acceptance notice has not yet been received. No applications after the deadline will be accepted.** This does not prevent the application from being processed by a Research Unit. The Research Unit may continue to proceed with the application at their own expense if the Unit agrees. If the Unit consults the Graduate School **at least ONE month prior to the departure** and students successfully go to and come back from their travel, the cost may be paid by the Graduate School.
- Your application will be rejected if the following documents are not submitted **at least ONE month prior** to the departure date of the conference or workshop travel:
 - Conference or workshop information (website, etc.)
 - Invitation letter or acceptance letter from the conference or workshop organizer.
 - Additional documents and materials may be required as necessary.

*You need to estimate enough time to apply and receive appropriate visas for your travel.

[Flight]

- The Graduate School arranges **the most economical, simple, round-trip, economy class flight between Okinawa and the nearest airport to the conference or workshop venue.**
- Air tickets for conference/workshop travel should be purchased **at least ONE month prior to the departure date. The Graduate School cannot purchase their tickets if students do not have valid visas by then.**
- In any combination of GS-funded Conference & Workshop travel and Unit-funded travel (of any purpose) when the Unit-funded portion comprises more than half of the combined travel, the Unit must cover the cost of flight acquisition.

[Ground Transportation]

- Students are responsible for ground transportation arrangement, **both in Okinawa and at the conference or workshop location.** The transportation fee will be reimbursed only for the most economical and direct route, in accordance with OIST's travel expense regulations (PRP CH29).
- **For domestic travel**, transportation for only one round trip between the airport and the conference or workshop venue is reimbursed. No other travel is reimbursed, including to or from accommodation (Travel Expense Handbook 4.5.1).

- **For international travel**, transportation for one direct round trip between the airport and the conference or workshop venue *or* accommodation is reimbursed, as is daily travel between accommodation and the conference or workshop venue.

[Personal Stay]

- Students may include a period of Personal Time Off up to three days per travel period (excluding weekend and holiday) as a personal stay, subject to the approval of the Graduate School. Furthermore, the number of days of personal stay (including Personal Time Off as well as weekends and holidays) should not exceed the number of business days over which the conference or workshop was held. When the allowable days for a personal stay during one business trip are exceeded, the expenses until the students complete their business and only half of the business-related airfare will be paid by the Graduate School.
- Neither *per diem* nor lodging allowances are provided during periods of personal stay. Weekends and Japanese public holidays are also regarded as personal stays if they occur either before or after the conference or workshop.

[Travelling dates]

- **For domestic travel**, students are allowed to arrive at the business location the day before commencement of business if the travel otherwise requires departure from home before 7am. Students are also allowed to depart the day after business is concluded if the travel otherwise requires arrival at home after 8pm.
- **For international travel**, students are allowed to arrive at the business location the day before commencement of business and to depart the day after business concludes in accordance with the Travel Expense Handbook (3.2.2). However, if an extra day is necessary to adjust to local time, or to prepare for business the day before, students are allowed to arrive 2 days before business commences. In these cases, the day before business commences is considered a “preparation day”, and is not deducted from Personal Time Off. A personal day cannot come before or after the preparation day.

[Per Diem and Lodging Allowance]

- A daily (*per diem*) allowance is provided to cover miscellaneous expenses during travel (such as communication fees, tips, lockers, laundry, etc.).
- The amount of *per diem* allowance is stipulated in PRP 26.9 "Appendices & Tables".
- Students are responsible for arranging accommodation. After travel is complete, up to the maximum amount as stipulated in PRP 26.9 "Appendices & Tables" will be reimbursed after submission of the original receipts.
- If there is a weekend or holiday in the middle of an event program that does not include business, and if it is necessary to stay during this break in the event program, then these days are counted as waiting days (non-business days) but are not considered a personal stay, and lodging allowance is provided.
- For preparation/waiting days, only lodging allowance is provided (no *per diem*).

[Registration Fees]

- Students are responsible for confirming the amount and the payment deadline of registration fee. The Graduate School pays for the registration fee only, and then only when students receive an acceptance from the organizer. **The Graduate School does not pay for any optional fees such as courses, seminars, workshops, fieldwork.** The Graduate School supports the payment of registration fees up to 100,000 yen. When “registration fees” cover lodging, meals, or both, the Graduate School pays only an additional

amount equivalent to the total applicable *per diem* and lodging allowance stipulated in the PRP 26.9 "Appendices & Tables". No separate *per diem* or lodging allowance is provided. If total fees are more than this amount, students are responsible for making initial payment and reimbursement will be made up to the total of 100,000JPY plus relevant *per diem* and lodging allowance.

- If the cost of meals is included in the registration fee, the student must report any provided meals during the conference or workshop without concealment or deception.
- If the cost of meals is clearly stated on the quote or receipt, the Graduate School covers the amount after subtracting any meal costs from the registration fee (full *per diem* is paid instead).
- Participation fees for social functions, such as after-conference parties or networking events (*konshin-kai*), are not reimbursable.
- Membership fees are not part of travel support provided by the Graduate School and are the responsibility of the student. Only when the membership fee is required to present will this be covered by the Graduate School. However, the Graduate School will not cover any membership fees for any subsequent years.

[Visa]

- Students are responsible for obtaining any necessary visas, Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA), or other electronic travel authorization applications **ONE week** before the departure day.
- If travel outside Okinawa is required to obtain a visa in the mainland Japan, then a **Business Travel Form for "VISA application travel for Conference & WS travel"** must be submitted **TWO weeks** prior to the period of travel and must be approved before travel arrangements can be made.
- Travel for the purpose of visa issuance should be planned with a minimal period of absence. In principle, the traveler should arrive immediately before the business and return quickly after the business has finished. (Travel Expense Handbook 3.2.2)
- Per diem allowance is not provided. Lodging allowances (if applicable), as stipulated in PRP 26.9 "Appendices & Tables", will be provided. Students are responsible for arranging their accommodation and flight by themselves. The air cost will be later reimbursed up to 30,000 yen.
- Visa and ESTA-application-related fees (application fees, travel costs, accommodation outside of Okinawa, etc.) are reimbursed after submission of original receipts once travel is complete. In any combination of GS-funded Conference & Workshop travel and Unit-funded travel (of any purpose) when the Unit-funded portion comprises more than half of the combined travel, the Unit must cover the cost of visa acquisition.
- Students are responsible for all costs and arrangements for their ground transportation.

[Document Submission]

- A "Travel and Expense Report" must be completed by the student to report completion of the travel and to inform the Graduate School of any travel expenses.
- Original receipts are required for all items claimed for reimbursement for international travel. For local transport with fixed costs, such as metro, bus, and train fares, an original receipt, or a printout of the website showing the route and fare, must be submitted.
- All receipts and website copies need to be in English or Japanese. Translations are acceptable.
- Receipts and original boarding passes are required for reimbursement if the flight tickets were purchased through services other than an OIST- preferred travel agency (PTA).
- **The Graduate School cannot reimburse any expenses without receipts.**

2. Educational Institution Visit Travel

- The Graduate School provides travel support to OIST PhD Students who wish to visit an educational institution. This support provides airfare costs only. Students are responsible for all other related expenses.
- **Educational institution visit travel CANNOT be combined with any other business travel funded by OIST, such as to attend a conference/workshop/lab visit/field trip funded by unit.**

[Application]

- **Students** may receive travel support to visit an educational institution **once per academic year**
- **A Business Travel Form** must be submitted **at least THREE months prior** to the departure date of the Educational Institution Visit Travel **AFTER an appointment with the intended institution has been arranged.**
- Application documents, materials and information:
 - Business Travel Form (under “Educational Institution Visit Travel”)
 - Confirmation letter from the host at the educational institution (the letter should **be addressed to the student and include the name of the educational institution, the name of the host (holding a title of professor or above), and the dates of visit**).
 - Additional documents and materials, as required.

[Flight]

- The Graduate School arranges **the most economical, simple, round-trip, economy class flight between Okinawa and the airport closest to the institution.**
- The Graduate School will notify students their flight itinerary before purchasing tickets, but no requests are accepted except in special circumstances. If a student has a preferred itinerary, they will be asked to arrange their flight by themselves. The dates of arrival and departure from the destination country are set accordingly based on flight availability.
- When the itinerary requires an overnight stay at a transit airport, the Graduate School covers the cost of this accommodation.
- Air tickets for educational institution visit travel should be purchased **AFTER the Business Travel Form is approved and any necessary visas are issued.**

[Ground Transportation]

- Students are responsible for all costs and arrangements.

[Business day and Personal Stay]

- **Only ONE day** is considered an official business day for the visit to the institution. Students must take Personal Time Off for the rest of the period of their Educational Institution Visit Travel, **including travel days but excluding weekends and Japanese public holidays.**
- **Length of the personal stay should be consulted and approved by the supervisors.**

[Per Diem and Lodging Allowance]

- Neither *per diem* nor lodging allowances are provided.
- Students are responsible for all costs and arrangements.

[Visa]

- Students are responsible for arranging and obtaining any necessary visas, ESTAs or other electronic travel authorization applications **at their own expense**.

[Document Submission]

- A “Travel Activity Report” must be completed by the student, and the submission of this form is required to report completion of the travel.
- **All receipts** and original boarding passes are required if flight tickets were purchased through services other than an OIST-preferred travel agency (PTA). All receipts must be in English or Japanese. Translations are acceptable.
- **The Graduate School cannot reimburse any expenses without original receipts and boarding passes.**

Supplementary Provisions

This Guidelines for Student Travel shall come into force from September 1, 2020.

Supplementary Provisions

This revised Guidelines for Student Travel shall come into force from May 1, 2021.

Supplementary Provisions

This revised Guidelines for Student Travel shall come into force from October 1, 2023.

Supplementary Provisions

This revised Guidelines for Student Travel shall come into force from April 1, 2024.

Supplementary Provisions

This revised Guidelines for Student Travel shall come into force from April 1, 2025.