

Authority:

- Approved by the President
- School Education Act

## **Chapter 5. Graduate School Handbook**

### **5.1. The Graduate School**

The mission of the Graduate School of the OIST Graduate University is to provide first-class postgraduate education to the highest international standard. The Graduate School implements the following three core policies:

#### **i. Admission Policy:**

The Graduate University aims to train researchers who will play important roles in the international scientific community at leading scientific institutions in the public and private sectors. Accordingly, the Admissions Policy will make it a principle to recruit candidates with the potential and motivation to become leaders in scientific research on the international stage.

Recruitment will focus on attracting outstanding students from within Japan and internationally. Here “outstanding students” means students who are highly motivated by the excitement and potential of the cutting-edge research that is possible at OIST, who have the curiosity and academic ability needed to excel in their chosen areas of study, and who have the capacity for independent research and original thinking. Our students will also require proficiency in oral and written communication skills in English for advanced study in science, and the ability to interact effectively with people from a wide range of backgrounds.

Students will be eligible to apply if they are expected to complete a BSc or equivalent degree prior to admission, or have previously completed a BSc, MSc or equivalent degree representing the completion of an undergraduate course in science and engineering, or exceptionally in other fields. The student should meet requirements for admission to a graduate school under the School Education Act. Those who hold a Masters degree may be exempted from some coursework with the approval of the Dean. Successful candidates will only be enrolled into a doctoral program.

#### **ii. Curriculum Policy:**

In keeping with the concept of “best in the world” we will recruit outstanding students and conduct top class academic instruction. The academic program will aim to develop the full potential of each student toward scientific excellence and independence. In accordance with this aim, every student will be treated as a unique individual and have their program

of studies tailored to their scientific aspirations, prior education, and current interests. The basic principles of the curriculum design are to facilitate independent scientific thinking, and to learn by doing research. There will be a single program without barriers between disciplines.

The students will be accepted directly into an integrated doctoral program leading to a postdoctoral career path in leading research institutes and universities. The doctoral program will have a standard enrollment period of five years, and will follow a course-based study system. A three-term per year system will be used. The first two years will comprise a combination of laboratory rotations and courses, designed to prepare the students for their doctoral thesis work in a flexible way. In the second year the students will choose a laboratory in which to undertake thesis research and will submit a Thesis Proposal. An examination for progression to thesis research is held at the end of the second year, based on the written Thesis Proposal and an Oral Examination that includes a defense of the proposal and examination of fundamental knowledge in the field of the research. In order to ensure the highest international standards an external examiner who is expert in the field of the thesis study is a member of the examining panel. After determination of readiness for thesis work the students will enter into a three-year period of thesis research, which will conclude with examination of the thesis.

Students entering the program directly from undergraduate studies will normally take about five years to complete their course of study. Those with a relevant Honors degree or a Master's degree in another area can finish in four years. Students entering with a Master's degree in the area they intend to specialize can finish in three years.

### **iii. Diploma Policy:**

The Ph.D. degree is conferred by the University in recognition of completion by the candidate of original research that makes a significant contribution to scientific knowledge. The degree is not awarded for completion of certain courses or a fixed period of enrolment, or for directed work as a technician. The work for the degree consists of original research and systematic studies that advance knowledge, conducted by the candidate with an appropriate degree of independence. In addition, the candidate must demonstrate the ability to communicate the results of their research and scholarship effectively in both oral and written English. The candidate must present their work in a thesis and defend it in an oral examination. A published paper or manuscript ready for submission must be included as an appendix to the thesis. A candidate may not submit for examination work that has been included in a thesis or dissertation that has been previously submitted towards a degree qualification.

In order to ensure the highest international standards a Final Examination is held after submission of the thesis. The Final Examination includes examination of the written thesis by two external examiners of international standing in the field of the thesis research, who also conduct an on-site oral examination.

The Graduate School is a division of the OIST Graduate University. The Dean is the head of the Graduate School. The Graduate School's major role is to provide academic services, student support and administrative support. These functions are organized into the corresponding sections as follows:

#### **5.1.1. Academic Services Section**

The academic services section supports the academic program of the graduate school, and performs the following tasks:

- i Participate in the formulation of academic policies related to teaching of graduate courses and the academic program;
- ii Administer the process of admission, registration and enrolment of students;
- iii Organize course advising and appointment of Academic Mentors
- iv Organize thesis supervision and appointment of supervisors and thesis committees;
- v Monitor the academic progress of graduate students;
- vi Coordinate conduct of course assessment and manage results;
- vii Determine the results of PhD candidatures on the recommendation of the examiners;
- viii Organize PhD examinations, external examiners, and coordinate the examination process;
- ix Award degrees and administer graduation requirements;
- x Conduct quality control processes including evaluation of teaching;
- xi Disseminate good practice in teaching and PhD supervision;
- xii Provide information about the Graduate School and its courses;
- xiii Coordinate teaching activities, faculty assignment of teaching, the course schedule and timetable of classes and examinations;
- xiv Manage teaching resources including seminar rooms and lecture theatres, teaching laboratories and equipment;
- xv Provide induction programs for new students and teaching faculty;
- xvi Coordinate academic content of international workshops, courses and seminars; and
- xvii Prepare and maintain database systems concerning:
  - a. Intending students and applicants for admission
  - b. Individual records of faculty members
  - c. Teaching assignments
  - d. PhD thesis supervision
  - e. Student academic records
  - f. Course schedules
  - g. Alumni

- xviii Provide secretariat for academic committees including:
  - a. Admissions committee;
  - b. Curriculum and Examination committees;
  - c. Thesis committees
- xix Maintain a student information system

#### **5.1.2. Student Support Section**

The student support section is concerned with the everyday requirements for living, health and welfare of students at OIST, and is charged with the following tasks:

- i Participate in the formulation of policy on issues broadly affecting graduate students, including housing, financial support and other welfare;
- ii Provide supporting services for prospective and current graduate students, special students and interns;
- iii Disseminate information and advice to students concerning scholarships and financial support;
- iv Provide orientation to life in Okinawa and Japan for new students;
- v Implement policies concerning student welfare, health, disability, childcare and safety;
- vi Administer student financial support and scholarships;
- vii Administer student welfare services;

#### **5.1.3. Admissions and Career Development Section**

The Admissions and Career Development Section is concerned with the recruiting of graduate students to OIST and supports professional development of current students in the Graduate School, and performs the following tasks:

- i. Assist faculty in the mentoring of students for career development and provide information and advice to students on career opportunities, among other things
- ii. Provide professional development courses as part of the academic program;
- iii. Undertake student recruitment activity
- iv. Organize seminars and lectures of general interest, among other things

### **5.2. Admissions and Registration**

The OIST Graduate University aims to train researchers who will play important roles in the international scientific community at leading scientific institutions in the public and private sectors. Accordingly, recruitment focuses on attracting outstanding students. Here “outstanding” means students who are highly motivated by the excitement and potential of the cutting edge research that is possible at OIST, who have the curiosity and academic ability

needed to excel in their chosen areas of study, and who have the capacity for independent research and original thinking.

The OIST Graduate Program is conducted in English, therefore our students also require proficiency in oral and written communication skills in English for advanced study in science.

<equal opportunity statement: Candidates are considered for admission without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, disability, or gender.>>

#### **5.2.1. Eligibility for admission to the graduate program**

Students will be eligible to apply for the OIST Graduate Program if they have completed a BSc, MSc or equivalent degree or expect to do so prior to the admission date. They must also meet admission requirements stipulated in Article 20 of the University Rules [\[link:\]](#).

Successful candidates for the OIST Graduate Program will only be enrolled into a doctoral program and only as full-time students. Students must indicate an intention to complete the program leading to a PhD. There is currently no provision for a student to undertake an MSc.

#### **5.2.2. Application for admission to the graduate program**

An applicant who wishes to become a candidate for a PhD shall apply for admission before the closing date. Applications at other times should be directed to the student enquiries desk. The President may permit flexibility in time of entrance, for example when this would give advantages in recruitment of excellent students, or when this would be of benefit for the academic progress of the student.

Specific application period and closing dates are announced on the OIST public website. Prospective students are required to submit an application for admission online. All forms are to be filled out in English. The following documents are required:

- i. Academic transcript and authenticated copies of diploma (BSc, MSc, etc.) An English explanation is required for transcripts that are not written in English.
- ii. Applicant's statement. This should be not more than 400 words and should address the following points:
  - a. The applicant's scientific interests and aspirations, and;
  - b. What the applicant hopes to gain from undertaking graduate studies at OIST.
- iii. An applicant who is seeking admission on the basis of a qualification from a university for which the language of teaching and/or examination is not English is required to provide standard language test scores (TOEFL or IELTS) obtained within last 2 years. There is no minimum score required but the information is necessary in determining preparatory course requirements.

- iv. A minimum of two letters of recommendation from appropriate academic sponsors.

The following documents may be submitted optionally, and will be taken into consideration by the selection committee if available:

- i Additional evidence of academic ability such as GRE general test scores obtained within last 2 years.
- ii Additional material such as copies of publications and abstracts of oral presentations, and other evidence of achievement.

The OIST Graduate School reserves the right to request an external evaluation of academic qualifications from any applicant.

### **5.2.3. Selection for admission**

The Admissions Committee makes the selection of students for admission, in accordance with the policies, rules and procedures of the Admissions Committee [\[link: 5.13.1\]](#).

This Committee reviews all material submitted by each student and makes a short-list of about 80 applicants. The short-listed applicants are invited to an Admissions Workshop.

#### **5.2.3.1. Admissions Workshop**

An Admissions Workshop will be held each year. The aims of the Admissions Workshop are to:

- i Conduct face-to-face interviews of candidates by the Admissions Committee or a subcommittee thereof. In the interview the Committee discusses with the student their aims and their motivation to undertake graduate studies at OIST. The panel will also discuss the student's academic record and career aspirations. The student will have an opportunity to ask questions about the graduate program. The interview will be recorded and available to the selection panel.
- ii Provide tours of OIST research and teaching facilities, student support and accommodation, and the surrounding environments.
- iii Provide a social program giving an opportunity for students to meet existing students and faculty members.

#### **5.2.3.2. Travel Rules for Candidates Attending Admissions Workshop**

For those invited to attend the workshop the travel costs and a per diem will be paid by OIST. The workshop will comprise a minimum of two full days in Okinawa, with flexibility regarding additional time.

#### **Meals and accommodation**

OIST will cover the cost of accommodation and meals for candidates attending the Admissions Workshop at the OIST Graduate University. Breakfast, lunch & dinner will be provided from the evening before through the morning after the workshop.

#### Travel support

- 1: OIST will support a round trip in economy class between Okinawa and the airport for the candidate's starting and returning destination, excluding expenses for any layover (at any Japanese or foreign cities).
- 2: Candidates are responsible for fees resulting from any change or cancellation of their flight and accommodation made after our travel agent or OIST has confirmed the booking. Change or cancellation of the itinerary by the candidate is not permitted without prior approval from OIST. In case of any breach of this rule, flight and/or accommodation might be charged to the candidate.
- 3: OIST will arrange transportation between Naha (Okinawa) airport and OIST Seaside House. If a candidate does not arrive in and/or depart from Okinawa as scheduled for personal reasons, they will be responsible for arranging and paying for their transportation.
- 4: If candidates wish to purchase travel insurance, they are asked to do so at their own expense.
- 5: Candidates are expected to arrive at OIST on the day before the workshop. The workshop will comprise a minimum of two full days in Okinawa, with flexibility regarding additional time. A longer stay in Okinawa is permitted provided that the graduate school approves the itinerary in advance. In case of an extended stay the candidate will be responsible for arranging and paying for their own accommodation.

#### 5.2.3.3. Final selection

The Admissions Committee will make a final selection of applicants who will be offered a place in the graduate program, and inform the Admissions Office. The successful applicants will be sent an official letter offering admission to the graduate program. Successful applicants will be required to accept or decline the offer within 30 days. The deadline for accepting or declining the offer may be extended by the Admissions Committee. A ranked list of reserves will be kept for a second round of offers if places become available.

#### **5.2.4. Number of Students Admitted**

In accordance with best-practice graduate teaching methods where low numbers of students for each faculty member are essential, and in line with overseas prestigious universities, the admission capacity of PhD full-time graduate students accepted by

the Graduate School shall be as stipulated in Article 15 of the OIST University Rules [\[link:\]](#).

#### **5.2.5. Transfer students**

Students who have commenced studies at another university and wish to continue their studies at OIST and obtain the OIST PhD degree may, under special circumstances, be admitted subject to meeting admission standards. Such cases may arise, for example, when newly appointed faculty members with existing graduate students are appointed at OIST before their students complete their studies. In such cases OIST wishes to ensure the best possible outcome for the students and their supervisors while preserving the high international standards of the graduate program.

Transfer students should complete the application process in the same way as other students but their folder should include a letter from the OIST faculty member explaining the situation and recommending the student for the OIST graduate program.

#### **5.2.6. Registration**

An applicant who has been admitted to the graduate program as a full-time candidate for a PhD will become a student of the OIST Graduate School on the date of first registration. Registration is a synonym for matriculation in this context. Every student is required to register on admission to the Graduate School (Article 25 of the University Rules [\[link:\]](#)), and thereafter at the beginning of each academic year of the graduate program.

Flexibility in time of admission or registration may be of advantage. For example, there may be advantages to the Graduate School in recruitment of excellent students, and there may be benefits for the academic progress of the student. Variations in time of registration may be allowed by the President at the request of the Dean of the Graduate School.

For graduate students registering for the doctoral program leading to a PhD, the following conditions apply:

- i Registration is restricted to full-time candidates.
- ii A full-time candidate may hold an external scholarship or receive financial support from OIST, or a combination of both, to enable him or her to study on a full-time basis, but may not otherwise hold employment.
- iii The full-time status of the student must be confirmed in a written declaration signed by the student and the Dean of the Graduate School.



In order to register, the student, must submit all forms in complete form to the Student Support section.

On registration a “registered student record” will be created for the student in the student record system. This record will be the official record of the student and will link to all other records including student academic record, progress reports, financial support, and housing, etc.

If the student does not fulfill all the requirements for registration by the deadline announced by the Office of the Graduate School, the admission will be automatically cancelled, and the student will be notified of cancellation in a timely manner.

#### **5.2.7. Student ID Card**

Students are required to carry a valid Student ID Card to access OIST facilities (doorways, classrooms, laboratories, administrative offices, libraries, etc.), and must present it when certificates are issued or when OIST staff asks for identification. Short-term students will be provided with a temporary Student ID card.

##### **5.2.7.1. Card Issue and Return**

When the student has been registered by the Graduate School, he or she will be issued with a Student ID Card. The card remains the property of the Graduate School, and must be returned upon completion of the period of study.

The card becomes invalid once the student is no longer a registered student at OIST.

##### **5.2.7.2. Access**

Entry to general laboratory areas is only permitted after the student has successfully completed the induction program during Enrollment Week, or similar (see PRP 5.2.8[\[link: 5.2.8\]](#)). Additional access to specific more restricted areas will only be made available after the appropriate safety and equipment training has been provided. Such access will only be provided while the student has a need to enter those particular restricted areas.

##### **5.2.7.3. Loss and Replacement of Cards**

In the event that a Student ID Card is lost or misplaced, the student must immediately inform the Graduate School Office. A replacement Student ID Card will be issued.

##### **5.2.7.4. Permissions**

Student ID Cards may not under any circumstances be loaned out or used by other persons, whether or not those persons are themselves authorized

to have access to OIST facilities. Cards may not be copied, reverse-engineered, distributed without permission, or cryptanalyzed. Cards remain the property of OIST even when invalidated. The Dean of the Graduate School may take disciplinary action in the event that these provisions are not followed.

#### **5.2.8. Induction program**

Students registered as full time OIST PhD students complete an induction program during Enrollment Week (the first week of the first term of the Academic Year). This program includes briefings on the PhD program, the mentoring and guidance of students, and student support, as well as training in the use of OIST facilities such as the IT infrastructure, the library, and the laboratories. Essential safety training to operate in the research laboratories and a preliminary health screen are mandatory before entry to the laboratory areas is provided.

OIST PhD students arriving outside of Enrollment Week and incoming special students may take this induction program at other times of the year more suitable to their arrival time. However, no laboratory access can be provided to students who have not completed this or a similar induction program.

#### **5.2.9. Application Fees, Admission Fees and Tuition Fees**

The Application Fee, Admission Fee and Tuition Fee (Article 42 of the University Rules [\[link:\]](#)) are set as follows.

Application Fee	0 Yen
Admission Fee	0 Yen
Tuition Fee	540,000 Yen /Annual

Payment of the Tuition Fee is by deduction of one-twelfth of the Tuition Fee from the monthly Research Assistant payments, over 12 months.

### **5.3. The OIST Graduate Program**

The OIST graduate school offers an integrated doctoral program leading to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). The degree of PhD is a research postgraduate degree. Such a degree shall be awarded to a candidate who

- i meets admission requirements and receives and accepts an offer of admission, and is registered as a full-time PhD student for a minimum of three years and not more than ten years; and
- ii satisfactorily completes prescribed coursework amounting to at least 30 points (20 from courses, 10 from research work) or alternatively, has obtained the equivalent number of credits based on prior study; and
- iii presents a successful thesis representing the result of the

- candidate's research which should constitute an original contribution to knowledge and contain material worthy of publication; and
- iv satisfies the examiners in an oral examination in matters relevant to the subject of the thesis.

### **5.3.1. Period of study**

The standard period of study is 5 years but may vary according to the level of preparation of the student and the progress of their research. The period of study may be reduced if the student has previously undertaken study that provides appropriate preparation.

#### **5.3.1.1. Admission with BSc.**

The period of study for a student entering with a first degree is 5 years.

#### **5.3.1.2. Admission with MSc.**

A student who has already obtained an MSc or has significant, documented research experience may enter directly into the second or third years of the program. Such a student will be required to complete an approved course of studies.

#### **5.3.1.3. Minimum period of study**

The minimum period of study is stipulated in Article 35 of the university rules [\[link:\]](#).

#### **5.3.1.4. Extension to the standard period of study**

In exceptional circumstances the period of study may be extended beyond the standard period of 5 years. Extension requires approval of the Dean of the Graduate School. In case of extension of the period of study, extension of financial support is not automatically granted. (see financial support section [\[link: 5.4.1\]](#))

#### **5.3.1.5. Maximum period of study**

The maximum permitted period of study is 10 years, including Study Leave and Annual Leave [\[link: 5.3.17\]](#).

### **5.3.2. Academic year and dates of terms**

The academic year begins in September each year. The school year is composed of three terms, with nominally 15 weeks of scheduled teaching in each term. This schedule was chosen in order to give enough time for completion of a meaningful project in each Research Rotation (See Article 17 of the OIST University Rule).

### **5.3.3. Course work requirements**

The first two years of the integrated 5-year doctoral program comprise a combination of Research Rotations and courses, designed to prepare the student for his or her doctoral thesis work in a flexible way. In the first two years of the program

students will undertake an individualized study program constructed from a combination of courses.

#### **5.3.4. Course credits**

The number of credits assigned to each course is stipulated in the Schedule of Courses [[link: http://groups.oist.jp/ja/grad/course-info](http://groups.oist.jp/ja/grad/course-info)]. Students will be required to accrue at least 30 points before graduation. Courses include Professional Development, Basic, Advanced, and Research Courses. The subtotal of Professional Development, Basic, and Advanced courses amounts to a value of 20 points. Research courses include Rotations and a Thesis Proposal amounting to a total value of 10 points. International Workshop Participation may provide additional points. Credits may be awarded for graduate courses completed at other universities or at OIST prior to admission (Chapter 5.6.2 [[link: 5.6.2](#)]).

#### **5.3.5. Mandatory Courses**

To maintain flexibility in the curriculum the number of mandatory courses (apart from the required research courses: Rotation and Thesis Proposal) is limited to two, each worth one credit. These courses are Professional Development I and II. These Professional Development Courses are designed to develop essential knowledge, experience, and abilities for successful completion of the graduate program and to prepare the graduate for a career in leading international academic or industrial research laboratories.

#### **5.3.6. Basic and Advanced Courses**

Each student will normally take at least 4 Basic courses and 4 Advanced courses. In general, Basic and Advanced courses are worth two credits. Information about Courses is provided in the Schedule of Courses [[link: https://groups.oist.jp/grad/courses-term-0](https://groups.oist.jp/grad/courses-term-0)] and Course Approval sections [[link: 5.3.10](#)]. Course advising [[link: 5.3.10](#)] is undertaken by an individual Academic Mentor for each student, to provide an individualized course of studies.

##### **5.3.6.1. Research Rotations**

Rotations form a major part of the student's work in the first year of the graduate program. In each rotation, the student will spend one term undertaking a specific project and will then move on to a different research unit. The Rotations provide a variety of experience in different laboratories that will broaden the student's understanding of different disciplines, techniques, and ways of thinking. Rotations may include theoretical work or modeling as well as laboratory benchwork. They are intended to help the student select the most appropriate research unit and research question for their thesis research. Students will typically complete three Rotations before deciding on a thesis topic.

Three Research Rotations are always required, with a total point value of 9 points. There may be exceptions to this requirement in the case of equivalent prior research experience, in which case credit may be

awarded in increments of 3 points as a cross-credit [\[link: 5.6.2.\]](#). In general, not more than 6 points can be cross-credited for rotations, so that all students must complete at least one rotation.

The choice of Rotations is part of the approved course taken by the student, and requires discussion with the Academic Mentor [\[link: 5.3.10\]](#). The number of students who may take a rotation in a given research unit is limited to 2 and not all choices will necessarily be available at a given time. Students should list in order of preference 5 rotations on the application form [\[link: \]](#) submitted with their proposed course for approval by the Dean of the Graduate School. Their top 3 will be accommodated whenever possible. If not possible, the committee will look further along their list to ensure they can complete their rotations during the first year.

Each Rotation entails completion of a meaningful project. The Professor in charge of the host research unit will assign the project topic, taking into account the interests of the student and the capabilities of the research unit. In the course of each rotation the student is required to:

- i. Write a rotation project proposal,
- ii. Complete the proposed project in the research unit,
- iii. Make an oral presentation to the research unit members, and
- iv. Submit a written report on the project.

Rotations are evaluated by the Professor in charge of the research unit, and the student's report together with the evaluation is forwarded to the Academic Services Section. The student's progress and performance in each Rotation will be discussed in the Curriculum and Examination Committee to ensure cooperation among faculty members in facilitating individual student progress.

### **5.3.7. PhD Thesis Proposal**

Students are required to complete a PhD thesis proposal, which is worth one credit. For details, see PRP 5.3.11.

### **5.3.8. Workload**

The maximum the number of courses that can be taken in any one term is four. However, students will not normally take more than two Basic or Advanced Courses per term, in order to leave time for independent studies, reading, and research work during Rotations.

### **5.3.9. Overview of order of study**

Year 1

- i Appointment of Academic mentor

- ii Course plan for Year 1 and Year 2 prepared (including rotations)
- iii Professional Development I.
- iv Complete approved Basic Courses and Advanced Courses if appropriate.
- v Three Rotations.

(See separate note regarding additional professional development courses.)

#### Year 2

- i Prepare PhD Thesis Proposal.
- ii Complete approved Advanced Courses and additional Basic courses as needed.
- iii Professional Development II commences.
- iv Nominate PhD Thesis Committee members.
- v Submit nominating forms and thesis proposal.
- vi Oral qualifying examination for progression to PhD thesis research conducted.

#### Years 3-5

- i Thesis research.
- ii Professional Development II.
- iii Workshop Courses.

#### Examination of thesis

- i Notification of intention to submit Thesis
- ii Thesis Examination Committee nominated.
- iii Thesis submitted
- iv Thesis presentation and oral examination conducted at OIST.

### **5.3.10. Course advising**

The particular selection of courses taken by any student is based on their educational background, intentions, and experience. Apart from mandatory Professional Development courses, there are no compulsory course requirements.

In such a flexible program, in which each student has an individualized program, excellent advice in course selection from an experienced advisor is essential. To provide this advice each student will have an independent Academic Mentor.

#### **5.3.10.1. Appointment of Academic Mentor**

An Academic Mentor (also called General Advisor) is assigned to each student from the time of admission. The Academic Mentor is required to work carefully with the student to select courses and Research Rotations that reinforce the foundations of the field of study and also provide the

breadth of study necessary to develop the ability to collaborate effectively across traditional boundaries. The Academic Mentor for each student will be appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School, with advice from the Academic Services Section. The Academic Mentor should have the following characteristics:

- i Significant prior experience in course advising and supervision of graduate thesis research. New Faculty may gain experience in course advising and supervision by serving on thesis committees as a committee member.
- ii High level of competence in the field, able to give advice to the student on the choice of courses that will prepare them for their PhD thesis research.
- iii Be a disinterested party charged with working for the best interests of the student

The Academic Mentor will continue to play a general mentoring role for the duration of the student's studies at OIST. The Academic Mentor cannot also be the same student's Thesis Supervisor. If a student elects to undertake their thesis research in the research unit of the Academic Mentor, a new Academic Mentor shall be appointed.

5.3.10.2. Duties of Academic Mentor in development of Course Plan  
The Academic Mentor and student together will formulate a plan of courses and Rotations for the first two years. The course plan will take into account any previously established credits, specific experience and research interests of the student. The Academic Mentor will guide the students to choose Rotations that include exposure to both experimental and theoretical approaches, and an interdisciplinary experience.

5.3.10.3. Approval of Course Plan  
The course plan will be submitted to the Dean of the Graduate School on the required form [\[link: \]](#). Each individual's course plan will be finally approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.

5.3.10.4. Approval of Research Rotations  
Research Rotations are approved by the Dean of the Graduate School taking into account the student preferences, and availability of rotations.

5.3.10.5. Course assessment  
Each course will be assessed as specified in the course schedules [\[link: http://groups.oist.jp/ja/grad/course-info\]](http://groups.oist.jp/ja/grad/course-info). Examiners may examine by means of written, practical, or oral test, or by continuous assessment, or by any combination of these. Examination scripts and reports must be written in English.

A student who is unable to complete an assessment because of genuine impairment may be permitted by the Dean of the Graduate School to complete a supplementary assessment. In such cases an application for special consideration must be submitted within 48 hours of the assessment on the appropriate form [\[link: \]](#).

There shall be no appeal against examination results. However, complaints about examination results will be considered by the Dean of the Graduate School and scripts will be checked for errors in marking. If errors are detected marks may be corrected up or down with the agreement of the examiner.

Formal assessment of courses will be coordinated by the Academic Services section. The dates of examinations and due dates of major items of assessment will be coordinated to avoid timetable clashes. Such dates will be fixed at the start of each academic year and students will be advised of the examination and assessment timetable at the start of the year.

Examination questions must be provided to Academic Services at least one month prior to the examination for preparation of examination papers. Examinations will be invigilated. Entry to the examination rooms will only be permitted for candidates enrolled in the course.

5.3.10.6.     Monitoring of student progress and student mentoring  
In the first two years, before confirmation of the student to progress to thesis research, the Academic Mentor will meet regularly with the student to discuss progress or problems with Courses and Rotations. The grades obtained in courses will be reported to the Academic Mentor and Curriculum and Examination Committee by Academic Services. In cases of difficulty the Academic Mentor will organize help and support for the individual student as needed. If difficulties continue the Academic Mentor has the responsibility of alerting the Dean of the Graduate School, who may initiate proceedings related to poor progress or performance. (Chapter 5.11.2 [\[link: 5.11.2\]](#))

### **5.3.11.    Qualifying for Progression to PhD Thesis Research**

Before commencing PhD thesis research all OIST graduate students will be evaluated by the Curriculum and Examinations Committee to determine if they are qualified for PhD thesis work. To initiate this process the student prepares the PhD thesis proposal, as described in Section [\[link: 5.3.11.3\]](#) after selecting a Thesis Supervisor(s) and Research Unit, and nominates a Thesis Committee. The thesis proposal, Thesis Supervisor, and Thesis Committee must be formally approved by the Dean of the Graduate School before the student commences thesis research



#### 5.3.11.1. Nomination of Thesis Supervisor, and Thesis Committee members

All students will be required to have a Thesis Committee - irrespective of the seniority of the Thesis Supervisor - to provide oversight of the thesis research supervision. The Thesis Committee will comprise the Thesis Supervisor, the Academic Mentor, and the cosupervisor or the third Thesis Committee member, selected from among OIST faculty members by the student in consultation with the Thesis Supervisor. If the cosupervisor is selected from faculty members external to OIST, an additional Thesis Committee member also needs to be selected from among OIST faculty members. The student is responsible for nominating the Thesis Supervisor and may suggest names for the other committee members. The thesis committee members should be nominated before appointment of the Examination Panel for the thesis proposal. The Academic Services Section will provide guidance and assistance to students in relation to this process.

PhD Thesis Supervisors must be full-time faculty members. Adjunct and visiting faculty members may be cosupervisors or Thesis Committee members. Faculty external to the university may be cosupervisors provided an institutional agreement exists with the university of the external faculty member. Information about such agreements is available from Academic Services.

#### 5.3.11.2. Process for Approval of Thesis Supervisor and Thesis Committee Members

In consultation with the intended PhD Thesis Supervisor and Academic Mentor, the student completes and submits the form for nominating Thesis Supervisor [link: Preliminary Thesis Research Supervisor] to the Graduate School. Furthermore, in consultation with the intended PhD Thesis Supervisor, Academic Mentor and prospective members of the Thesis Committee, the student completes and submits the form for nominating Thesis Committee members [link: Thesis Proposal Submission Cover Sheet] along with the thesis proposal to the Graduate School. The Thesis Supervisor and Thesis Committee members for each student will be appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School, with advice from the Academic Services Section. If the proposed Thesis Supervisor is the same person as the Academic Mentor, a new Academic Mentor will

be appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School to avoid any conflict of interest.

#### 5.3.11.3. PhD Thesis Proposal Requirement

The PhD thesis proposal is the student's plan for their thesis research, and forms an important part of the evaluation for progression to thesis research. A positive outcome of the evaluation means that the proposal is acceptable and that the Curriculum and Examinations Committee agrees that the student is competent to proceed with the plan under the supervision of the thesis committee. The thesis proposal must be the student's independent work in which the student makes an original contribution to the development of the research question, design of the research, and review of the literature. In the course of developing the proposal the student is expected to discuss the intended research with the thesis supervisor. The supervisor should advise the student on what is possible in the research unit, and discuss the scientific questions, the relevant existing work, and the research design and methods.

Students must write the thesis proposal in their own words. In referring to the work of others correct citation and attribution of sources is essential. Plagiarism by copying or paraphrasing is strictly forbidden and if established may lead to a fail without further examination.

The student's supervisor and proposed Thesis Committee must read the proposal before it is submitted. The student's Thesis Committee may give feedback on one draft of the proposal and allow the student to make necessary revisions before submission. When satisfied that the plan is achievable and that the research goals are appropriate, the supervisor and committee members indicate formal agreement by signing the cover page. The proposal is then submitted for examination. The student must defend the proposal in an oral examination.

#### 5.3.11.3.1. Format and Content of the Thesis Proposal

It is part of the student's training in research to prepare a concise, rigorous, and scholarly thesis proposal and present it in the correct format. There is no strict length requirement for the thesis proposal. It is anticipated that most students will need 8,000-10,000 words (about twenty pages of text) to adequately explain the motivation and goals of their project, review the relevant literature, and describe progress to date. However, concise proposals are encouraged, and a proposal of 5,000 words, which covered all these points, would be perfectly acceptable. The proposal should contain the following sections:

- i. Front Page. This should include the name and logo of the OIST Graduate University, the words “PhD Thesis Proposal”, the title of the thesis proposal, the names of the student, primary supervisor (and co-supervisor if there is one), and the month and year of submission of the thesis proposal.
- ii. Abstract. This should be a single paragraph of not more than 500 words, which concisely summarizes the entire proposal.
- iii. List of Abbreviations
- iv. Introduction and Literature Review. This should include a statement of the problem, the overall aims, and background to the research including a review of relevant existing work (literature review). The literature review should be of publishable quality and provide a concise, scholarly review of the literature explaining the background to the proposed research. The review should provide the context for the aims of the proposed research in relation to existing work on the topic.

- v. Research Plan. This should begin with the specific aims of the research and provide a concrete plan for completion of the research including the design and methods. This section should include an explanation of how the methods will address the aims and the significance of the results for the field.
- vi. Progress Report. This should be a report on the research achievements of the student in the laboratory of the proposed supervisor during preliminary thesis research. The report should not duplicate material previously submitted for evaluation as part of a previous degree, but may include work completed during rotations at OIST. The report may include examples of results obtained with the methods proposed. It is understood that results may not be available in projects requiring, for example, development of methods, sample preparation, or recruitment of participants, in which case other evidence of progress should be reported.
- vii. Bibliography. The bibliography should include all references cited in the text and should not include references that have not been cited. In preparing the bibliography, students may use any of the conventional styles of referencing that include the titles of articles, such as the Harvard, Vancouver or ACS systems. However, the style chosen must be used consistently and correctly throughout, both for in-text citations, and formatting of bibliographic entries
- viii. Appendices. These are optional and should only be used if necessary.

The examiners commit to read the proposal, but the Curriculum and Examinations Committee reserves the right to require students to rewrite excessively long, or poorly constructed, thesis proposals, without forwarding them to examiners. The student cannot assume that the examiners will read the optional appendices.

The complete doctoral thesis proposal document must be submitted to the Graduate School by the due date as nominated by the Dean, normally no later than four weeks (28 days) prior to the oral defense. An emergency exception to the standard due date deadline can be granted by the Dean on the basis of a written request from the supervisor.

#### 5.3.11.4. Examination and Defence of Thesis Proposal

An Examination Panel for the thesis proposal comprises three members: an External Examiner, an Internal Examiner, and a Chair appointed by the Curriculum and Examinations committee. The Examination Panel will conduct a three-hour oral examination that will include a defense of the thesis proposal. The Examination Panel will include an External Examiner who is expert in the field of the proposed thesis and external to OIST. Normally the examination will be conducted in person at OIST but if this is not possible the Dean of the Graduate School may permit electronic participation by audiovisual link. The Curriculum and Examinations Committee appoints the External Examiner taking into account nominations provided by the proposed supervisor. Similar conflicts of interest precaution apply as outlined in 5.3.13.3.1 below. The Examination Panel also includes an Internal Examiner from OIST faculty members, who is appointed by the Curriculum and Examinations committee. An OIST faculty member with knowledge of OIST standards and regulations concerning thesis proposal examinations is nominated by the Curriculum and Examinations committee and will chair the Examination Panel. The Examination Panel will not include the proposed thesis supervisor or student's mentor. The Thesis Supervisor and other members of the Thesis Committee may attend the oral examination as observers but should not participate in the examination.

##### 5.3.11.4.1. Conduct of the Examination

The only material normally permitted in the examination room is the thesis proposal itself. Additional material such as copies of additional results figures developed since the thesis proposal was submitted, are permitted provided they are supplied to the Chair at least one week in advance, and the Chair agrees to their inclusion.

The Chairperson starts the examination by announcing the start of the examination and explaining the examination process to the student and examiners. The Chairperson then invites the student to give a concise summary of the research proposal, which should normally take less than 15 minutes. The use of slides or other material for the presentation is not permitted. However, the

student may refer to a hard copy of the thesis proposal during the examination. A white board and pens are also provided.

After the summary, the Chairperson invites the External Examiner to examine the student. The Internal Examiner may follow the External Examiner or, as appropriate, join the discussion with the student. As the expert in the field of the thesis proposal, the External Examiner is expected to play the principal role in the examination.

It is expected that the examination will comprise a balance of roughly equal parts: (1) defense of the thesis proposal and (2) examination of fundamental knowledge in the field or fields of study relevant to the thesis topic.

In the defense of the thesis proposal (part 1), the student is expected to demonstrate the necessary advanced knowledge and understanding to undertake the proposed thesis research and show their original and independent contribution to the proposal and the research question.

In the oral examination (part 2), the student is expected to demonstrate adequate fundamental knowledge in the field or fields of study relevant to the thesis topic, and the ability to organize, apply and convey that knowledge effectively.

In the conduct of the examination it is envisaged that part 2 will flow naturally from part 1. A rigid division into parts is not necessary and the balance of time spent on each part, while nominally equal, may be varied at the discretion of the examiners.

The examination shall not continue for more than three hours maximum, but may be concluded sooner if the examiners are satisfied that they have sufficiently examined the student and are able to make a recommendation. The Chairperson formally concludes the examination when the allowed time has elapsed or the examiners have indicated they have no further questions.

After the examination, the External Examiner and Internal Examiner independently provide brief written reports on the examination to the Chairperson within one week of the examination. The Chairperson then forwards the reports to the Curriculum and Examinations Committee. **The report shall remain confidential and shall not be released to the student until after the Curriculum and Examinations Committee has formally decided on the outcome of the examination.**

The examiners' report is required to include one of the following possible recommendations listed below:

- i. **Pass.** The examiners recommend that the student be advanced to candidacy. The examiners may recommend additional course work or stipulate minor revisions to the thesis proposal.
- ii. **Defer.** This outcome is possible only if the student's academic preparation is sufficient, and the thesis proposal is not acceptable in its present form but could be acceptable pending major revisions. The thesis proposal must be re-examined in a second oral examination. In such case the Examiner's report shall itemize the deficiencies of the thesis proposal that need to be addressed in the revisions, and any deficiencies in the scope and depth of the student's knowledge that require remediation.
- iii. **Fail.** This is the outcome when academic preparation is not sufficient or the thesis proposal is not suitable for re-examination, or has not met the required standard on re-examination. No re-examination is allowed in the case of a fail outcome.

#### 5.3.11.5. Evaluation for Progression to PhD Thesis Research

The purpose of evaluating qualification for progression to PhD thesis research is to determine whether the student has an adequate fundamental knowledge in the field or fields of study relevant to the thesis topic, and can organize, apply and convey that knowledge effectively. The Curriculum and Examinations Committee will make this evaluation taking into account the completed program of study and the student's performance in courses and rotations at OIST, the thesis proposal, and the student's performance in an examination. The thesis proposal forms an important part of the evaluation. The thesis proposal must be the student's independent work and clearly show the original contribution of the student to the research question. The evaluation may occur when requested by the student and normally before the end of the second year of study, and at the latest within 12 months of the start of preliminary thesis research. When evaluating the student, the Curriculum and Examinations Committee will consider the following materials:

- i. The student's PhD thesis proposal.



- ii. A report from the examining panel as separately described (5.3.11.3).
- iii. The student's academic record at OIST.
- iv. Write-ups of Rotations.
- v. An Endorsement of the thesis proposal from the proposed thesis supervisor, the student's academic mentor, and other members of the intended thesis committee, on the prescribed Thesis Proposal Submission Cover Sheet (link).
- vi. Further material deemed relevant to the evaluation.

At the next available meeting of the Curriculum and Examinations Committee after the examination, the committee considers the reports from the examiners and makes a recommendation. The Curriculum and Examinations Committee will reach one of the three decisions listed below and record the decision in the student's academic record:

- i. **Pass.** The student is advanced to candidacy. The committee may require additional course work or stipulate minor revisions to the thesis proposal.
- ii. **Defer.** This outcome is possible only if the student's academic preparation is sufficient, and the thesis proposal is not acceptable in its present form but could be acceptable pending major revisions. The thesis proposal must be re-examined in a second oral examination after which the committee must reach a decision of either pass or fail. The committee will stipulate a deadline for submission of a revised proposal and date of re-examination. If the student fails to resubmit by the deadline the outcome will change to fail.
- iii. **Fail.** This is the outcome when academic preparation is not sufficient or the thesis proposal is not suitable for re-examination, or has not met the required standard on re-examination. No re-examination is allowed in the case of a fail outcome.

This outcome is sent to the student and the Thesis Committee as soon as it becomes available, together with the reports of the examiners. If revisions are required, a timeline for their completion is described in the outcome letter. Revisions must be submitted by the deadline, for consideration by the responsible person (usually the Examiner or Chair). Once revisions have been accepted, the student is notified after ratification at the next available meeting of the Curriculum and Examinations Committee.

Procedures for appeal against the outcome of the evaluation are separately described (5.3.11.8).

5.3.11.6. Exit with MSc (“Non-continuation” outcome of evaluation for progression).

A student who, after evaluation for progression to PhD thesis research, fails to meet requirements for progression to PhD thesis research may submit a thesis for consideration for award of the MSc degree in accordance with Article 37, paragraph 3 of the University Rules. An MSc may be awarded if the candidate has successfully completed the following minimum requirements:

- i. at least 30 points (20 from courses, 10 from research work),
- ii. submission of a thesis describing their own research work at a level judged to be suitable for the award of MSc by a panel of examiners including at least one external examiner.

There is a time limit in such cases. The student must achieve the necessary course credits and submit their MSc Thesis for examination within six months of being informed of the outcome of the Evaluation.

The examining panel will include an external examiner, an internal examiner, and a chair appointed for this purpose by the Curriculum and Examination committee. The examiners will examine the written thesis and submit a report within 3 months of receipt of the thesis, including a recommendation of either “passed” or “failed”. The Curriculum and Examination committee reviews the recommendation and considers whether all academic requirements for the award of the degree have been satisfied. In the case of a “pass” outcome the procedures for conferment of the degree (5.3.15) shall be followed. In the case of a “fail” outcome the Individual Student Record shall be updated with an entry on the next day, stating that the outcome is “fail” . At the time when the individual Student Record is updated, the candidate is sent a letter advising of the outcome.

5.3.11.7. Exit with MSc prior to progression to PhD thesis research

Under exceptional circumstances, when deemed necessary by the Dean of the Graduate School, a student who, prior to evaluation for progression to PhD thesis research, requests early exit from the program may be allowed to submit a thesis for award of the MSc degree in accordance with Article 37, paragraph 3 of the University Rules. Early exit must be requested within two years of enrolment and approved by the Dean of the

Graduate School. An MSc may be awarded if the candidate successfully completes the following minimum requirements:

- i. At least 30 points (20 from courses, 10 from research work).
- ii. Submission of a thesis describing their own research work at a level judged to be suitable for the award of MSc by a panel of examiners including at least one external examiner.
- iii. Having been enrolled in the University for at least two years.

The student must achieve the necessary course credits and submit their MSc Thesis for examination before the end of the third year of enrolment. The examining panel will include an external examiner, an internal examiner, and a chair appointed for this purpose by the Curriculum and Examination committee. The examiners will examine the written thesis and submit a report within 3 months of receipt of the thesis, including a recommendation of either “passed” or “failed”. The Curriculum and Examination committee reviews the recommendation and considers whether all academic requirements for the award of the degree have been satisfied.

#### 5.3.11.8. Appeals procedure

A student who has failed the qualifying examination (or MSc thesis examination) may lodge an appeal. Grounds for appeal include incorrect application of the procedures, but objections to the evaluations in the assessment by the examiners, the decision of the Curriculum and Examinations Committee, and the composition of the examining panel are not a basis for appeal. The qualifying examination is a confidential process, and this confidentiality must be maintained throughout any appeals process. The appeal must be in writing, include a concise statement of the reasons for the appeal, and be lodged with the Manager, Academic Services, within 28 days of the date of the letter advising the outcome of the qualifying examination. The appeal will be referred to the Dean of Faculty Affairs, who will determine the course of action to be undertaken, taking into consideration the grounds for the appeal stated by the candidate. This may include a review of the examination process. The Dean of Faculty Affairs will determine the outcome of the appeal as either:

- i. The procedures for the qualifying examination were applied correctly, and the appeal is unsuccessful.
- ii. The procedures for the qualifying examination were not applied correctly, but the variation in procedures did not influence the outcome of the examination, and the appeal is unsuccessful.
- iii. The procedures for the qualifying examination were not applied correctly, and the variation in procedures did influence the outcome of the examination, and the appeal is successful. In this case, the Dean of

Faculty Affairs will determine further action to be taken, which may include re-examination.

The outcome of the appeal will be determined within 28 days of the date the written appeal was received by the Office of Academic Services.

#### **5.3.12. Monitoring the student's progress in research**

From the commencement of the thesis research period, the Thesis Supervisor will take primary responsibility for monitoring progress of the student, assisted by the Thesis Committee. The Academic Mentor will continue to act as a support person and an advisor who can act in a confidential manner in case of problems between the student and the Thesis Supervisor.

##### **5.3.12.1. Research progress reports**

Confirmed students are required to submit an annual progress report on the progress of the student's thesis research. The student will prepare the report, which will be endorsed by all members of the Thesis Committee, and forwarded to the Dean of the Graduate School.

Satisfactory progress is required for continuation in the program. In case of lack of progress or poor quality of research, the Dean of the Graduate School may intervene and suggest solutions. If the lack of progress or poor quality of research continues, the Dean of the Graduate School may, in consultation with the Curriculum and Examination Committee, order discontinuation.

##### **5.3.12.2. Discontinuation**

A candidature may be discontinued:

- i if academic progress is not satisfactory; or
- ii if the student has failed to meet the requirements as stipulated elsewhere [\[link: 5.4. \]](#).

#### **5.3.13. Ph.D Degree Completion**

The Ph.D. degree is conferred by the University in recognition of completion by the candidate of original research that makes a significant contribution to scientific knowledge. The degree is not awarded for completion of certain courses or a fixed period of enrolment, or for directed work as a technician. The work for the degree consists of original research and systematic studies that advance knowledge, conducted by the candidate with an appropriate degree of independence. In addition, the candidate must demonstrate the ability to communicate the results of their research and scholarship effectively in both oral and written English. The candidate must present their work in a thesis and defend it in an oral examination. A candidate may not submit for examination work that has been included in a thesis or dissertation that has been previously submitted towards a degree qualification. Course credit requirements are listed in PRP 5.3.13.7.

#### **5.3.13.1. Thesis Requirements**

The thesis must present original research that makes a significant contribution to scientific knowledge. The thesis must form a coherent narrative that includes a statement of the problem, a scholarly review of the relevant literature, and must present, in detail, the methods, results, discussion and conclusions of the research. A collection of published articles, irrespective of their impact on science, falls well short of what will be considered acceptable. The thesis must be formatted in chapters and submitted according to the OIST Guidelines on the Preparation of Theses (“Guidelines”).

Candidates are strongly advised to publish peer-reviewed articles in international journals based on their thesis work in a timely fashion and preferably before submitting the thesis. Such publication of thesis research is evidence of a significant scientific contribution that will be taken into account by thesis examiners, and is essential for future career prospects. Published, archived or submitted articles may be included in an appendix of the thesis. In the absence of a published, archived or submitted article, the thesis should append at least one manuscript, drafted by the candidate, of publication quality and ready for journal submission.

When papers based on work completed as part of the PhD thesis are submitted, are in press, or in print, it may be possible to modify and include material from them as chapters in the thesis, providing that the thesis as a whole presents a coherent account of the research. For details concerning these matters refer to the Guidelines.

#### **5.3.13.2. Final Examination**

A candidate is examined both on the written thesis and in an oral examination.

The examination process is strictly confidential.

The candidate must submit to the Graduate School written Notice of Intent to Submit a Thesis with enough time for the examination to be arranged before the proposed submission date.

The Graduate School will provide guidance on the time required in each case. Before submission of the thesis, the Graduate School must confirm that the course credits necessary for graduation have been completed.

If there are insufficient course credits, the required additional credits must be completed before the final examination.

#### **5.3.13.3. Appointment of the Thesis Examination Panel**

After receiving the Notice of Intent to Submit a Thesis, the Curriculum and Examinations Committee (CEC) will appoint thesis examiners from within and outside the University, to form a Thesis Examination Panel, as follows:

- i. Two Examiners selected from two different working-countries, who are expert in the field of the proposed thesis and external to OIST. The CEC appoints the examiners taking into account nominations provided by the Thesis Supervisor. The CEC is responsible for determining if the nominated examiner is expert in the field of the proposed thesis research, taking into account the publications of the examiner in international peer reviewed journals.
- ii. A Chair selected from the OIST faculty members with knowledge OIST standards and regulations concerning PhD thesis examinations. The Thesis Supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the nominated examiners meet the specified conditions. The Academic Services Section of the Graduate School is responsible for checking that the specified conditions are satisfied. If the conditions are not satisfied, the nomination shall not be submitted to the CEC, and the Supervisor shall be advised on the grounds for declining the examiner and asked to nominate a new examiner by the Academic Services Section. The CEC may alternatively appoint an examiner who has not been nominated by the Supervisor.

#### 5.3.13.3.1 Conflicts of interest in examinations

The CEC will not appoint examination panel members who have or appear to have conflicts of interest. For OIST faculty members, a conflict of interest is deemed to exist if the faculty member is involved in the supervision of the thesis research of the candidate, or is collaborating in the research project of the candidate. For non-OIST faculty members a conflict of interest is deemed to exist if they:

- i. Are involved in the research
- ii. Have current collaborations with members of the thesis laboratory, or previous collaborations in the past 5 years.
- iii. Have had prior or ongoing contact with the supervisor that may appear to compromise objectivity, such as having been in the same department as the supervisor, having been a thesis or postdoctoral supervisor (or vice versa), or having joint publications or grants with the supervisor in the past 5 years
- iv. Have had prior contact with the candidate that may appear to compromise objectivity, such as having been in the same department as the candidate, having supervised the candidate in academic or project work, or having joint publications or grants with the candidate at any time.

#### 5.3.13.4. Examination of the Written Thesis

The two external examiners read the thesis, separately prepare a report and choose a recommendation regarding the acceptability of the thesis for a PhD from the following:

- i. accept, and proceed to oral examination
- ii. accept, and proceed to oral examination (minor revisions required),
- iii. revise and resubmit (major revisions requiring reexamination of the written thesis before proceeding to oral defense),
- iv. consider for an MSc degree [see: 5.3.13.4.1],
- v. Fail.

The Chair of the Thesis Examination Panel reviews the recommendations. Where necessary, the Chair may formally seek advice related to the thesis research from other OIST faculty with relevant knowledge of the field.

If both examiners recommend either (i) or (ii) the process continues to the oral examination.

If one or more examiner selects either (iii), (iv) or (v) the Chair convenes a meeting of the Thesis Examination Panel by teleconference to determine a recommendation, which is passed to the CEC along with the examiners' individual reports. The CEC then decides on the course of action from among the listed options (above).

If any of the reports is not available prior to the oral examination, the Chair convenes a meeting of the available members of the Thesis Examination Panel by teleconference to determine a course of action from among the listed options (above).

The candidate is provided with copies of the examiners' reports when they become available.

##### 5.3.13.4.1 Exit with MSc ("Award lesser degree" outcome of PhD thesis examination)

A candidate who fails to meet requirements for the award of a PhD may be awarded the degree of MSc on the recommendation of the Thesis Examination Panel.

#### 5.3.13.5. Oral Examination

The Thesis Examination Panel conducts the oral examination for up to three hours in private at OIST.

It is a requirement that all examiners participate in the oral examination. Exceptionally, if an examiner is not available in Okinawa at a time convenient for a meeting of the Thesis Examination Panel, the Dean of the Graduate School can approve remote participation of an examiner by teleconferencing.

The Thesis Supervisor and members of the Thesis Committee may attend the oral examination as observers but may not participate in the examination.

After the oral examination the Thesis Examination Panel confers privately to determine a recommendation from one of the following:

- i. PASS
- ii. PASS with minor revisions
- iii. FAIL

The Chair will prepare a Report to be forwarded to the Dean of the Graduate School and endorsed by all members of the Thesis Examination Panel stating their recommendation chosen from the options listed above, and including relevant points of discussion that contributed to the decision.

In the case of a “PASS” outcome, the candidate is informed by the Dean of the Graduate School and must lodge the final version of the thesis with the Graduate School.

In the case of “PASS with minor revisions” outcome the report specifies the revisions to be made, which may be by reference to individual examiner’s reports. The Dean of the Graduate School informs the candidate of the required revisions. After the candidate has made the revisions the Chair of the Thesis Examination Panel approves the final version of the thesis or, if the revisions are unsatisfactory, returns it for further corrections. If necessary, the Chair may ask the external examiners to evaluate the revisions. When the final version of the thesis has been approved, the candidate is informed by the Dean of the Graduate School and must lodge the final version of the thesis with the Graduate School.

Students Candidates are required to remain at OIST until the final version of the thesis has been accepted and lodged with the Graduate School.

In the case of a "FAIL" recommendation, the Report specifies the reasons for the outcome and is referred to the CEC. The CEC may decide to consider for an MSc degree [\[link: 5.3.13.4.1\]](#) or fail the candidate.

A candidate who has failed the thesis examination may lodge an appeal. The procedures for an appeal are separately stipulated.

#### 5.3.13.6. Public presentation

There is no requirement for a public defense of the degree thesis as part of Doctor the examination process. As part of Philosophy. their professional development candidates are expected to give a final presentation of their research for the OIST community, but this does not form part of the examination.

#### 5.3.13.7 Summary of Completion Requirements



In order to graduate with the PhD degree, a candidate must have been registered as a full-time student for a minimum enrolment period stipulated in Article 35 of the university rules[\[link\]](#) and successfully met the following minimum requirements:

- i. completed and passed at least 30 course credits (20 credits in case of MSc graduates)
- ii. submitted a PhD thesis for examination,
- iii. obtained a PASS outcome of the Thesis Examination

The academic record for the candidate will record the name of the Thesis Supervisor and list separately the names of the members of the Thesis Committee.

A candidate who fails to meet requirements for the award of a PhD may be considered for the award of a degree of MSc if they have successfully completed the following minimum requirements:

- at least 30 credits
- submission of a thesis describing their own research work at a level judged to be suitable for the award of MSc by a panel of external and internal examiners.

#### 5.3.13.8 Appeals procedure

Appeals will be managed by the process stipulated in 5.3.11.7.

[\[link: http://www.oist.jp/policy-library/5.3.11.7\]](http://www.oist.jp/policy-library/5.3.11.7)

### **5.3.14. Prizes**

The graduate university may establish prizes.

### **5.3.15. Graduation**

#### 5.3.15.1. Conferment of Degree

After the Curriculum and Examinations Committee has determined that all academic requirements for the award of the degree have been satisfied, the student shall submit a bound copy of his or her thesis, with all required corrections completed, to the University library, together with an electronic copy for the University record.

On confirmation of receipt of the electronic file of thesis, the secretary of the Curriculum and Examinations Committee passes to the faculty assembly the recommendation to award the degree. The recommendation shall be sent electronically. If there are no objections within three working days, the recommendation shall be considered as having been confirmed by the Faculty Assembly. In the case that there are valid objections the matter shall be put on the agenda for the next Faculty Assembly meeting, and the student and members of the thesis committee shall be informed. The Dean of the Graduate School shall prepare a recommendation for the Faculty Assembly after hearing the nature of the objection.

Once the Faculty Assembly has approved the recommendation, the minutes of the Faculty Assembly hold a record of the names of the candidates, the date, and title of the thesis. The Individual Student Record shall be updated with an entry by the end of the month in which the Faculty Assembly approved, stating that all requirements for the degree have been satisfied and the degree has been conferred. The record includes the date, the title of the thesis, the name of the Thesis Supervisor, and the names of the members of the Thesis Committee.

At the time when the individual Student Record is updated, the candidate is sent a letter confirming that the degree has been conferred and that the candidate may graduate at the next graduation ceremony or “in absentia”. The degree certificate is presented by the President at the graduation ceremony. A student who chooses to graduate in absentia is provided with the degree certificate after the graduation ceremony. The format of the certificate is as per Form 1 (for PhD Degree) and Form 2 (for MSc Degree) [\[link\]](#) .

When the President of the Graduate University has conferred a Doctoral degree, it shall be reported to the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, and the summary of the contents of the thesis and the summary of the results of the thesis examination shall be publicized on the internet within 3 months following the day of the conferment of the Doctoral degree.

When a Doctoral degree is conferred, the entire text of the thesis related to the conferment of the Doctoral degree shall be published within one year following the day of the conferment of the Doctoral degree; provided however, that this shall not apply to the thesis published prior to the conferment of the Doctoral degree. The student may request that the full text not be published, and instead only publish a summary of the contents of the thesis in lieu of the entire text of thesis when there is significant reason and with approval of the Dean of the Graduate School. In this case, the University will make available for inspection the entire text of the thesis in response to a request, in hard copy and on University library premises. When deemed necessary for intellectual property protection or other reasons, this inspection will be subject to a non-disclosure agreement. When the Dean of the Graduate School judges that the significant reason no longer exists, the entire text of thesis related to the conferment of the Doctoral degree shall be published through the medium specified by the university.

#### 5.3.15.2. Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science

##### 5.3.15.2.1 Policy

The OIST Honorary Doctor of Science (DSc) Degree recognizes those who have made profound and enduring contributions to scholarship, culture, or improved quality of life in society, and who either have a real and substantial relationship with the OIST Graduate University or whose work has had a major impact for OIST. It is important that recipients be persons of great integrity, as the choices we make reflect our values as an institution. The Honorary DSc Degree is awarded to the recipient in person at the Graduation Ceremony at the OIST Campus. The Honorary DSc Degree may not be awarded in absentia.

##### 5.3.15.2.2 Degree Awarded Honorary Doctor of Science

##### 5.3.15.2.3 Procedures

Nominations or suggestions for Honorary Degrees may be sent direct to the Chair of the Honorary Degrees Committee by any member of the University community. Nominations will normally be considered by the Committee three months before the Graduation Ceremony.

Nominations for the Honorary Degree are considered by the Honorary Degree Committee, which makes recommendations to

the President. Nominations are made on the Honorary Degree Nomination Form[Link]. If the nomination is supported, and the President agrees, and the recipient accepts the offer, the Degree is awarded at the next Graduation Ceremony.

#### 5.3.15.2.4 Honorary Degree Committee

The Honorary Degrees Committee consists of the Dean of Research, who chairs the committee, the Dean of Faculty Affairs, the Dean of the Graduate School, and the Chair of the Faculty Assembly. The duty of the Committee is to select persons to be recommended in writing to the president for the Honorary Degree. The final decision is made by the president, who is not bound by the recommendation.

#### 5.3.15.2.5 Confidentiality

It is important from the beginning of the process of nomination through to the point at which a decision is reached and the successful candidates have been invited by the President, that a high level of confidentiality be maintained.

#### 5.3.15.2.6 Format of Nominations

- (i) a supporting submission which contains an introductory statement providing the grounds for the award;
- (ii) a brief account of the nominee's life and work;
- (iii) an outline of the nominee's most significant academic or other achievements;
- (iv) an assessment of his/her international standing;
- (v) OIST connection or link, or if none any tangible association with our values; and
- (vi) any other information the proposer would wish to bring to the attention of the Committee. If relevant, nominations should be accompanied by details of the nominees' published works in an Appendix.

#### 5.3.15.3. Graduation Ceremony

The University holds an annual Graduation Ceremony, to which all eligible PhD graduates from the preceding year are invited. The President will present those graduates in attendance at the ceremony with their degree certificates in the presence of the assembled faculty of the University. Graduates who choose to graduate in absentia will be mentioned at the ceremony and their certificate will be sent to them by mail.

OIST official academic dress comprises a black gown with red border and white piping, together with a black velvet tam and tassel. PhD graduates of the OIST Graduate University augment the university gown and tam with a hood, presented at the graduation ceremony. Academic dress is made available by the Graduate School for rent or purchase by faculty members, students, and graduates. The rental fee covers cleaning and other costs, while the purchase cost reflects the actual cost of academic dress manufacture. Graduating students may elect to rent for the graduation ceremony and purchase at a later date. Academic dress rentals are not permitted for off-site use.

Under the OIST travel rules, the Graduate School will pay for airfare for the OIST graduates attending the ceremony to receive their degree certificate. In addition, the Graduate School will cover the cost of guest rooms in Seaside House for the graduates and family members for their accommodation if available.

### **5.3.16. Student professional development**

#### 5.3.16.1. Careers Advice

The OIST Graduate School has a dedicated Careers Development Coordinator in the Admissions and Career Development Section. The Careers Development Coordinator provides individual careers advice, as well as help with CV and resume writing, job searching and career exploration to students.

#### 5.3.16.2. Teaching Assistantship

The OIST Graduate School offers OIST PhD students and Special Research Students opportunities to gain experience and develop skills as Teaching Assistants. Teaching Assistants may contribute to various educational activities such as:

1. Assisting an OIST faculty member in the delivery of an official OIST Graduate School course. Teaching Assistants may contribute in activities such as laboratory classes and tutorials and preparation of materials under the supervision of the faculty member. It is expected that the OIST faculty member is present for the scheduled teaching hours to provide mentoring and quality control; this should not be used to replace faculty in teaching. Selection as a Teaching Assistant for a course is decided by the faculty member in charge of the course.
2. Acting as tutors in OIST International Workshops and Courses, or in preparatory or remedial courses for OIST students. Selection is decided by the faculty member in charge of the Workshop or Course.
3. Contributing to educational outreach activities such as open campus, school visits, children's science. Selection is decided by the organizer of the outreach activity.
4. Assisting in educational activities at other universities, by agreement between the universities. Selection is decided by the graduate school in consultation with the other university.
5. Assisting in other educational activities organized by the Graduate School.

Teaching experience is important for an academic career. The graduate school will keep a record of Teaching Assistant activity for each student. A record of teaching experience will form part of the Professional Development course requirements.

Teaching Assistants are expected to prepare thoroughly for their teaching activity by reading all materials and studying necessary background. Preparation of material may be required. Attendance at training provided as part of Professional Development courses is also expected. Because of the course requirements in the first years of the PhD program, Teaching Assistants will normally only be appointed after successfully completing their qualifying examination.

Students wishing to apply for Teaching Assistant appointments should discuss their request with the faculty member or organizer of educational activity and submit a completed Teaching Assistant Application Form to the Student Support desk. This form is necessary for recording the Teaching Assistant activity of each student. The form should detail the contact hours and be signed by the proposed supervisor. A CV should be attached.

Service as a Teaching Assistant is normally unpaid because students receive financial support by other mechanisms. Exceptional cases and other necessary items are separately stipulated.

#### **5.3.17. Leave of Absence and Holidays**

Research study in the Graduate School is considered a year-round activity that continues between teaching terms. A student who wishes to be absent from Okinawa and / or the approved course of study and research, or who proposes to take vacation, shall be required to submit a written application for leave of absence. There are four types of leave of absence, namely, Annual Leave, Study Leave, Non-study Leave and Special Leave. Apart from Sick Leave, a student must seek and receive approval BEFORE going on leave.

##### **5.3.17.1. Annual Leave**

In addition to University Holidays (5.3.17.5), Students are granted 20 days of Annual Leave per Academic Year, adjusted pro rata from their first day, or 10 days if the entire period of study is less than one year. At the start of each Academic Year thereafter, students are granted an additional 20 days Annual Leave. For students taking courses, this leave must be taken in the designated break periods between terms; Annual Leave will not usually be approved during term. For students engaged in thesis research work, the approval of the Thesis Supervisor (or in the case of Special Research Students, the University supervisor) is required for Annual Leave, which may be taken during term time. Annual Leave newly granted and not used in the current year will be carried over to the following year. The carried over Annual Leave must be used prior to the Annual Leave newly granted in the following year.

##### **5.3.17.2. Study Leave**

A student may be granted Study Leave for the purposes of study while taking approved courses at other institutions outside Okinawa. A student may be granted Study Leave for the purpose of research outside Okinawa only at a partner institution with which the University has entered into a formal exchange agreement. Any period of Study Leave granted shall be counted towards the period of study. Conference, summer school and workshop attendance outside Okinawa, and field work are not normally considered as Study Leave but as a business trip.

##### **5.3.17.3. Non-study leave**

A student may request or be asked to take Non-study Leave when he / she is best advised for personal, health, or other reasons to have time completely away from his / her academic responsibilities. Under no circumstances shall leave of absence under this category be granted on each occasion or cumulatively for a period of more than two years for the

entire period of study. Any period of Non-study Leave granted shall result in the extension of the period of study by the period of absence.

#### 5.3.17.4. Special Leave

Students may be granted Special Leave for a variety of reasons with approval by the Graduate School. The table below indicates acceptable reasons and length of leave:

	Category	Reason	Period
1	Sick Leave	Unable to work due to injury or illness. Medical certificate is necessary when more than 2 consecutive days are taken. Extension beyond 6 days is considered to be Non-study Leave, with approval.	2 to 6 days
2	Marriage	• The Student	Up to 5 days
		• Child of a student	Up to 2 days
		• Sibling of a student	1 day
3	Funeral	• Parent, spouse, or child of the student	Up to 7 days
		• Grandparent, sibling, or spouse's parent	Up to 5 days
		• Relatives other than above within the third degree	Up to 3 days
4	Maternity	Special arrangements for reduced study load, etc., for students before and after birth of their child are available. See Childbirth Accommodation Policy, Chapter 5.3.18.	Up to 2 terms
5	Paternity	Special arrangements for reduced study load, etc., for students before and after birth of their child are available. See Childbirth Accommodation Policy, Chapter 5.3.18.	Up to 2 terms
		• Wife's delivery of child	Up to 3 days
		• To provide care to a new	Up to 5 days



		born baby or for another child of the same family who has not entered elementary school during the period from 8 weeks (14 weeks for multiple pregnancies) before the expected date of wife's delivery to 6 weeks after the actual date of delivery.	
6	Child Medical Care	To provide care to a child who has not entered elementary school when the child is sick or injured or when the child takes vaccination or medical check-up.	Up to 5 days for one child or up to 10 days for two or more children per calendar year
7	Family Care (Short-term)	To provide care to a family member with a condition requiring care.	Up to 5 days for one family member or up to 10 days for two or more family members per calendar year
8	Jury Service	To serve as juror or supplemental juror, or to become a candidate for jury duty.	Days and hours necessary for the purpose
9	Bone Marrow Donor	To register as a bone marrow donor, or to offer bone marrow to a person other than family members, or to take examinations and hospitalizations required for bone marrow donors.	Days and hours necessary for the purpose

#### 5.3.17.5 University Holidays

University holidays shall be as follows:

- i. Saturdays and Sundays; and
- ii. Holidays specified in the Act on National Holidays (Act No. 178 of 1948).

- iii. Year-end and New Year Holidays (from December 29 to January 3 of the following year)
- iv. The president may specify extraordinary holidays when deemed necessary.

### **5.3.18. Childbirth Accommodation Policy**

The OIST Graduate University promotes diversity and supports balance in work and family life. It recognizes the need to accommodate the demands on students associated with pregnancy, childbirth, and the care of children. The University encourages women to undertake postgraduate education and supports women who decide to have children while at graduate school. It also recognizes the demands on partners who share in the care of a newborn child, on parents who adopt, and foster parents. The Childbirth Accommodation Policy comprises a set of measures designed to accommodate these needs, supporting family life during graduate studies.

The measures are designed to make it possible to maintain the mother's full-time, registered student status before and after childbirth, and to facilitate her return to full participation in class work and research in a seamless manner. It is also designed to support partners, adoptive and foster parents sharing in the care of a newborn child.

This policy is intended to complement and not replace the communication and cooperation between student and academic mentor, thesis supervisor, and course coordinators in their good-faith efforts to accommodate the new family needs. It is the intention of this policy to reinforce the importance of that cooperation, and to provide support where needed to make that accommodation possible. A faculty member may not discontinue supervising a student's thesis research on the basis of the student's decision to give birth to, adopt or foster a child.

### **Summary of Provisions of the Childbirth Accommodation Policy**

The Childbirth Accommodation Policy has four components:

- (1) an Academic Accommodation Period of up to two consecutive academic terms around the time of the birth, during which the student may postpone course assignments, examinations, and other academic requirements;
- (2) continuation of full-time registration as a graduate student with continued access to OIST facilities and housing during the Academic Accommodation Period;
- (3) full financial support through the Academic Accommodation Period; and,
- (4) leave from regular duties as a Research Assistant in accordance with the Maternity Leave provisions for Full-time employees, as follows:

Prenatal Leave. Research Assistants who expect to give birth within 6 weeks (14 weeks for multiple pregnancies) are granted prenatal maternity leave. When the actual delivery is after the expected delivery date, the additional

days are included in the maternity leave.

Postpartum Leave. Research Assistants are granted 8-week paid postpartum maternity leave after giving birth. In this period, the University may not require them to work. However, up on their request, the Research Assistant may return to work for duties approved by a doctor.

### **Eligibility**

The Childbirth Accommodation Policy applies to registered OIST graduate students, who are anticipating or experiencing a birth, adoption, or delivery by surrogacy.

An Academic Accommodation Period can be granted to the father of the child or partner of the mother in cases where graduate student couples share the care of newborn children and the partner is the primary caregiver for the infant.

An Academic Accommodation Period can also be extended to the new parents after adoption, fostering a child, or the birth of a biological child using a surrogate to bring to term.

### **Planning for the Academic Accommodation Period**

The student should initiate discussions with the academic mentor and the Dean of the Graduate School at least four months prior to the anticipated birth in order to make arrangements for an Academic Accommodation Period. These discussions should establish a timeline for academic issues (e.g., class attendance, rotations, examinations, thesis proposal, and other academic commitments) that will be affected by the birth of a child and by the postponement of academic requirements.

It is essential that students undertaking thesis research consult with the thesis supervisor well in advance of the birth. It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with faculty and with graduate school administrators for course completion and for continuation of educational, research and professional development activities before and after the Academic Accommodation Period.

One of the purposes of the Childbirth Accommodation Policy is to make it possible for women to maintain their full-time student status. By remaining full-time students, the visa status of international students is not affected. Careful consultation should be undertaken to ensure that the implications for academic progress, visa status, and financial support have been thoroughly investigated. In completing the application for the Academic Accommodation Period, the student may optionally request up to two terms of part-time enrolment. If part-time enrolment status is approved, the student will retain all privileges of the Childbirth Accommodation Policy. Independent of making this request for part-time enrolment, if a serious medical problem were to arise for mother or newborn, the woman student would be eligible for extension of the period of Childbirth Accommodation Policy until the medical problem is resolved.

## **Residency requirements**

The expectation is that the student will be in residence in Okinawa, and, assuming good health of the pregnant woman or new mother and the infant, will remain engaged in class work and research, even if at a reduced level.

## **Childbirth Accommodation Policy for students who are not in residence**

A student may choose to take leave from the Academic Program and not be in residence for a period of time. In such a case a period of Non-study Leave may be granted in accordance with the Non-study Leave regulations (ref PRP 5.3.17.3) up to a maximum of two consecutive academic terms around the time of the birth.

The student may postpone course assignments, examinations, and other academic requirements during the period of absence and extension of the period of study by the period of absence. Registration as a graduate student with continued access to OIST facilities and housing will continue during the Non-study Leave period.

Financial support will be in accordance with the provisions for Full-time employees for prenatal leave and postpartum leave as detailed in the Maternity Leave provisions <ref>.

## **Applying for an Academic Accommodation Period**

Graduate students anticipating or experiencing the birth of a child may formally apply for an Academic Accommodation Period of up to two consecutive academic terms around the time of the birth. This Academic Accommodation Period is *not* a leave of absence from University responsibilities.

The Childbirth Policy is administered by the Office of the Dean of the Graduate School through an application process. In that application, the student specifies the dates on which the Academic Accommodation Period begins and ends, with the requirement that the maximum duration is two consecutive terms. A letter from the student's health-care provider stating the anticipated delivery date must accompany the application. If the childbirth occurs prior to filing the application, the accommodation period begins on the birth date.

The Office of the Dean of the Graduate School will notify the student, the student's academic mentor, and the relevant University administrative offices that the Academic Accommodation Period has been approved, along with the dates for the accommodation period.

## **During and After the Academic Accommodation Period**

### *Funding*

Once a student submits an application, the Office of the Dean of the Graduate School will ensure that students whose applications have been approved will see no change in their financial support as Research Assistants.

Students who are supported by fellowships external to OIST must adhere to the rules of the granting agency with respect to absences from academic and research work. If the granting agency requires suspension of fellowship benefits the student will be eligible for substitute payment from OIST under the terms of a temporary Research Assistant agreement.

### *Duration*

The student, academic mentor, and thesis supervisor (if applicable) should recognize that it might not be feasible to return to a regular research assistant assignment immediately after the accommodation period. In that case, arrangements should be made to assign limited on-site duties. These issues should be negotiated sensitively with the student's needs in mind. The student should work with the academic mentor, thesis supervisor, and Dean of the Graduate School to make arrangements for ongoing support beyond the accommodation period if unable to return to normal duties immediately.

The maximum duration of the Academic Accommodation Period is two consecutive academic terms. If need extends beyond this limit due to ongoing issues associated with childbirth, different leave provisions may apply depending on the nature of the issues. In such case the affected student should make the situation known to the Dean of the Graduate School as early as possible so that measures can be taken.

### *Coursework and Research Activities*

Approval of an Academic Accommodation Period will include an automatic extension of due dates for assignments and other class work and research-related requirements. Faculty are expected to work with the student to make arrangements for submitting work for completion of requirements when the student returns.

### *Access to the Child Development Center*

Students are strongly advised to register, at the earliest possible time, for the waiting list of the Child Development Center for access to on-campus nursery care and early childhood education.

### **Additional Comment**

The Childbirth Accommodation Policy establishes *minimum* standards for accommodation for a graduate student giving birth or acting as the primary caregiver for a newborn or adoptive infant. It is expected that academic mentors, faculty, and the graduate school administration will work with sensitivity and imagination to provide more than this minimum, according to the particular circumstances of the student. For example, women whose research involves working with toxic chemicals or fieldwork may need some form of accommodation during the entire pregnancy and during lactation. Taking care of an infant is time-consuming and sleep-depriving, so advisors need to have realistic expectations

about rates of progress on research. For their part, new parents need to keep the lines of communication with their advisors open, and demonstrate to their advisors that they are academically engaged and making progress on coursework and research, even if it is at a somewhat slower pace than prior to giving birth. In other words, the Childbirth Accommodation Policy is intended to support—not replace—the open communication and good will that should characterize the relationship between student, mentor and thesis supervisor at the Graduate University.

## **5.4. Student support**

### **5.4.1. Financial support for students**

The mission of OIST is to create an international graduate university that is best in the world. This requires attracting the best students in the world. Other leading international universities at this level provide support for tuition costs and living expenses. The OIST Graduate University offers financial support comparable to that offered by other leading research universities.

#### **5.4.1.1. OIST Graduate University Research Assistantship and Senior Research Assistantship (Assistantships)**

OIST Graduate University Research Assistantships and Senior Research Assistantship (hereafter, Assistantships) are awarded to students on full-time study in the doctoral program at the OIST Graduate School. A student in good standing who performs research or who assists others in performing research and educational activities is registered as a Research Assistant. A student in a thesis lab after the qualifying exam is registered as a Senior Research Assistant.

During tenure of the Research Assistant and Senior Research Assistant, the student must undertake full-time doctoral studies in Okinawa, unless a special case for exemption from this requirement has been previously approved by the Graduate School.

The maximum tenure of a Research Assistant is normally two years and three years for a Senior Research Assistant. Students are expected to complete the requirements for graduation within the five year period. In case of early completion of requirements, Senior Research Assistant is continued for four weeks after the date of degree conferral, to allow time for completion of matters required for conclusion of the research project (such as archiving of the research records).

Continued financial support for students in the doctoral program depends on maintained performance in study and research, and is based on the provision of satisfactory annual Progress Reports. Assistantships will be discontinued in the event of unexcused absence, failure to

maintain adequate academic performance, unethical behavior, or other reasons determined by the academic oversight process to be incompatible with good standing.

Overseas tenure of a Research Assistant and a Senior Research Assistant is not normally permitted. In exceptional circumstances, a period of overseas tenure may be granted by the Graduate School, if it can be shown that access to research guidance, facilities or opportunities overseas is essential to the completion of the project.

Assistantships are subject to annual confirmation of the Budget status and are paid in equal monthly installments. Standard remuneration of the OIST Graduate University Assistantships is about 3.0 million yen per year including the amount equivalent to tuition fee. However, if the Research Assistant is awarded for tuition waiver, the amount equivalent to tuition fee is not provided.

#### 5.4.1.2. External fellowships and awards

While the University maintains financial support system, students are strongly encouraged to apply for external fellowships. In order to reward success, remuneration provided by the university as an OIST Graduate University Assistantships or Teaching Fellowship including the amount equivalent to tuition fee may be used to supplement external fellowships, up to a maximum of 3.6 million yen total. An OIST Graduate University Assistantships or Teaching Fellowship may be held concurrently with external scholarship on this basis. There is an obligation on the student to report external fellowships to the Graduate School office.

##### 5.4.1.2.1. Teaching Fellowship

The University may offer special appointment as a Teaching Fellow to a student who had been recognized for academic and research excellence by an external award (JSPS scholarship etc.) In such cases payment is made on a fixed-hours basis. It is still necessary to record the teaching activity and hours for the individual academic record. Students applying for special appointment as a Teaching Fellow should apply with the required documents through the online web form.

Appointment of Teaching Fellows will be made by the Curriculum and Examinations Committee.

Service as a teaching fellow is normally paid. This depends on the availability of budget, and the nature of the activity. When payment is possible it is made on an hourly basis for the contact hours and preparation time. Paid preparation time, when necessary, is based on a maximum of 4 hours preparation for 1 hour of contact time. Details

of the conditions of service are separately stipulated.

#### 5.4.1.2.2. Tuition waiver

The University may offer full amount tuition waiver to those who are recognized for their excellence in performance of research work by external awards (JSPS scholar etc.). Students applying for tuition waiver should apply with required documents through online web form. Application review and decision making will be made by the Curriculum and Examination Committee.

#### 5.4.1.3. Financial Support in Exceptional Circumstances

In general, PhD funding at OIST is only for the standard period of study which is 5 years. A student who continues to make satisfactory academic progress in the program should be on course to complete within 5 years, and progress is reviewed each year to keep on this track. Faculty and students should plan a program that can be concluded, including write-up of the thesis, prior to the end of the 5th year.

In exceptional circumstances events beyond the control of the student may compel an extension of the 5 years. In such cases the duration of financial support may be extended by the Graduate School, subject to the availability of funds. In all cases, there must be a clear plan for completion, supported by the Thesis Committee. The following circumstances may be considered possible grounds for an extension:

1. Delays due to the vicissitudes of research.

Exceptionally, a student who is making satisfactory academic progress may be unable to complete their thesis research project in the timeframe due to research-related factors beyond their control. On the recommendation of the Thesis Committee, and approval of the Dean of the Graduate School (who may refer the matter to the Curriculum and Examinations Committee) extension up to 3 additional school terms (started from the beginning of each term using the terms defined in Article 17 of the University Rules) may be possible.

2. Change in thesis research laboratory.



This may occur because of the departure or incapacity of the supervisor, or because of a change of supervisor that has been approved by the graduate school. In such cases, subject to continued satisfactory academic progress, the financial support may be extended by the Dean of the Graduate School for the period necessary to complete the course of study. Continuation is subject to positive annual academic progress reviews.

3. Other extenuating circumstances.

Where there are other significant extenuating circumstances, the Dean of the Graduate School may grant an extension of up to three terms upon request with supporting documentation (e.g. a medical certificate). The extension shall start from the beginning of each term using the terms defined in Article 17 of the University Rules. Students who become responsible for the care of a new born or newly adopted child in the family may apply for an extension of the financial support period that takes into account the provisions of the Childbirth Accommodation Policy [\[link: \]](#).

Applications for extension of financial support should be made in writing to the Dean of the Graduate School by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> year.

5.4.1.4. Travel support for educational purposes

The University does not provide grants for home leave. However, the University provides travel support for visiting an educational institution. The amount of support will be based on the lowest quote obtained from the University's PTAs for a round trip economy flight to the student's destination, no per-diem and lodging allowance will be provided. However, the hotel arrangement due to flight connections can be considered as a part of this travel support. As long as there is no hindrance to study and the Research Assistant work, it is possible to take paid annual leave or other types of leave during the travel period. This support is available once each year of study. For students who do not yet have an approved thesis supervisor, the travel is approved by rotation supervisor and the Dean of the Graduate School. When students do have an approved thesis supervisor, the thesis supervisor and the Dean of the Graduate School approve the travel. For details concerning visiting an educational institution, please refer to the OIST Guidelines for Student Travel [\[Link:\]](#).

#### 5.4.1.5. Travel grants for students to attend conferences

Rules for travel grants for students to attend conferences and other educational activities are stipulated in PRP Chapter 29[\[link: 29\]](#). For details concerning attending conferences and other educational activities, please refer to the OIST Guidelines for Student Travel <Link:>

#### 5.4.1.6. Travel grants for career development

Rules for travel grants for students to attend domestic career events and other career activities are stipulated in PRP Chapter 29. For details concerning attending career events and other career activities, please refer to the OIST Guidelines for Student Travel [\[Link:\]](#).

#### 5.4.1.7. Relocation

##### 5.4.1.7.1. Transfer Allowance

Transfer Allowance can be provided stipulated in the table below:

Domestic	36,600 yen
International	62,800 yen

Family relocation allowance:

Spouse & Child 12 years of age or older = 2/3

Child under 12 years of age = 1/3

##### 5.4.1.7.2. Relocation Expenses

Actual relocation expenses can be reimbursed up to the maximum level stipulated in the table below:

	Maximum level per household
Domestic	250,000 yen*
International	500,000 yen

\*350,000 yen if transferring a car from mainland Japan

Reimbursement of relocation expenses can only be provided once.

If a Student voluntarily terminates the agreement within the first three months, OIST S.C. may request return of the total amount

provided. If the termination is due to unavoidable circumstances (including family health reasons), OIST S.C. may waive the claim regarding return of the above amount.

#### 5.4.1.8. Commuting

In principle, students who live outside the campus and need to commute are expected to use the OIST shuttle bus.

##### 5.4.1.8.1 Commuting Allowance

A commuting allowance may be paid to students who live outside of campus but cannot use the OIST shuttle bus for reasons deemed valid by the Dean of the Graduate School. Details on the allowance are stipulated separately by “Rules Pertaining to a Commuting Allowance for Students” [\[link\]](#) .

#### **5.4.2. Assistance with visa requirements**

The student support section provides assistance with student visas. Students must have completed visa requirements prior to registration. Students needing assistance must contact the student support section at least three months prior to registration dates. Students who do not have a valid student visa cannot be registered.

#### **5.4.3. Student health and welfare**

The mission of the student support section is to ensure a worry-free student experience at OIST. The student support section is the first point of contact for students in need of assistance.

##### 5.4.3.1. Student health and counselling

OIST has a Campus Clinic service during working hours. If necessary, the clinic refers students to local health services. Excellent hospitals and clinics are available in Okinawa, and assistance with English and other languages is available.

Counseling services are available as separately described.

##### 5.4.3.2. Insurance

###### 5.4.3.2.1 Health Insurance

Subscription to National Health Insurance is a mandatory requirement and the cost will be covered by students. [< ref: link to National Health Insurance info >](#)

###### 5.4.3.2.2 Personal Accident Insurance for Students Pursuing Education and Research (PAS), and Liability Insurance coupled with PAS (Gakkensai and Gakkenbai)

All students are covered by Gakkensai and Gakkenbai provided by Graduate School. [<ref: link to Gakkensai and Gakkenbai>](#).

#### 5.4.3.3. Childcare

Students needing childcare will be eligible to use on-campus early-childhood education facilities when these become available.

#### 5.4.3.4. Recreational, cultural and social activities

The student support section supports the welfare of students by organizing and facilitating recreational, cultural and social activities.

### 5.4.4. Accommodation

Subsidized accommodation is provided for students living in the Campus Housing. All students are expected to live in the accommodation provided at least 1 year. If a student is required to live off-campus due to unavoidable circumstances, such as shortage of housing in the Campus Housing, the University may lease off-campus housing for residence of the student. (Please refer Student Rental Housing Rules [\[link: \]](#).)

#### 5.4.4.1. On-Campus Housing

All On-Campus Housings have air conditioning in living room and bedrooms, and a gas cook-top in the kitchen. Furnished On-Campus Housings also have a full set of the basic furniture and furnishings needed for daily life. However, items such as video players, stereos, televisions, personal computers, etc. are not included. Additional facilities are available on the first floor of the Village Center including: residents support desk, linen/dry-cleaning service, convenience store, coin laundry, gym, clinic, student lounge, common use kitchen with full size appliances, and meeting/event rooms. A storage locker is provided for each apartment at street level.

On-Campus Housings are rented on an annual basis (rent is paid monthly in advance, but contract is for 1 year, and there is no refund for holiday periods etc.). Utility charges will be the responsibility of the students. Students will have to pay for electricity, gas, water, plus optional landline phone, fiber internet, and cable TV if required.

Rents are as follows:

Apartment type	Use	Floor Area	Net Rent (Furnished)	Net Rent (Unfurnished)
1LDK	Single	45 m <sup>2</sup>	21,600 yen/mth	13,600 yen/mth
2LDK	Single	70 m <sup>2</sup>	80,000 yen/mth	65,000 yen/mth
2LDK	2 Share*	70 m <sup>2</sup>	18,000 yen/mth*	10,500 yen/mth*
2LDK	Family	70 m <sup>2</sup>	41,000 yen/mth	21,000 yen/mth
3LDK	3 Share*	100 m <sup>2</sup>	Master BR: 20,000 yen/mth*	Master BR: 11,000 yen/mth*

			Other BR: 18,000 yen/mth*	Other BR: 10,000 yen/mth*
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\* This applies only when both occupants are students.

Minor change in rates on the order of 10% is possible.

An application for housing should be made on the application form available from the Facility Management section.

#### 5.4.4.2. Off-Campus Housing

If a student is required to live off-campus due to unavoidable circumstances, such as shortage of housing in the Campus Housing, the University may lease off-campus housing for residence of the student. (Please refer Student Rental Housing Rules.)

#### 5.4.4.3. Payment

Rent, Utilities (if applicable) and other necessary costs will be deducted from the emolument of the Research Assistantship. Those who do not have Research Assistantship will be billed.

### 5.5. Categories of students

The OIST Graduate University recognizes a student body comprising full-time PhD students registered in the OIST graduate program, and also Special Students who are attending OIST for educational purposes but not seeking the OIST degree. The Graduate School aims to ensure an optimal experience for all students at OIST and provides various kinds of support for students in different categories. The main categories of student defined in Article 43 of the University Rules [\[link: \]](#) are (1) Registered OIST PhD Students or (2) Special Students in several categories.

#### 5.5.1 Registered OIST PhD Students

All provisions concerning students in the OIST PhD Program including financial support as a Research Assistant, are stipulated in the Graduate School Handbook Chapter 5 [\[link: \]](#) and are not elaborated here.

#### 5.5.2 Special Students

Special Students are persons other than registered OIST PhD students, who are undertaking educational activity in the Graduate School. There are several categories of Special Student:

Category	PRP	Eligibility	Period
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<b>Special Research Student &lt;Tokubetsu-Kenkyu-Gakusei&gt;</b>	5.5.2.1.	Students receiving research guidance or co-supervision toward a degree. (A written agreement with the partner institution is required.)	6 months and longer
<b>Research Intern</b>	5.5.2.2.	Students obtaining research experience under the direction of an OIST professor.	Up to 6 months
<b>Visiting Research Student</b>	5.5.2.3.	Students participating in a research project as part of a recognized collaboration, or some other defined research project under the supervision of an OIST professor.	Up to 364 days
<b>Visiting Students &lt;Kamoku-Tou-Risyuusei&gt;</b>	5.5.2.4.	Students taking courses at OIST for credit at another university	Academic term
<b>Course Auditors &lt;Choukousei&gt;</b>	5.5.2.5.		Academic term
<b>Junior Research Fellows</b>	5.5.2.6.	Students whose thesis supervisor acknowledges that they need to conclude their research project after the degree conferral at OIST.	Up to 6 months

These categories are separately considered in the following sections.

5.5.2.1 Special Research Students <Tokubetsu-Kenkyu-Gakusei>  
Students of other universities (referred to as the “partner institution”) who are permitted by the partner institution to receive research guidance at the OIST Graduate University under the terms of an agreement with the partner institution, may apply to become Special Research Students at OIST. Special Research Students are not OIST PhD degree candidates and there is no mechanism to change the status of a Special Research Student to become an OIST PhD student except by application to the OIST graduate program in the usual way.

Candidates for Special Research Student status must obtain approval from the Dean of the OIST Graduate School and Dean of Research of the OIST Graduate University. The Dean of the Graduate School will make a recommendation to the Dean of Research after consultation with the OIST research supervisor and partner institution. In general, such applications will be approved provided this poses no obstacles to the education and research activity of the Graduate School.

Faculty members of the OIST Graduate School can provide supervision to Special Research Students of the partner institution under the terms of an agreement with the partner institution. The period for which a student can receive research guidance as a Special Research Student must be stipulated in the agreement. This term is normally for one year, subject to renewal as needed. Upon the completion of the period of supervision at OIST, or annually, the OIST supervisor is required to submit a written report on the student to the Dean of the OIST Graduate School.

Special Research Students can take OIST courses as Course Auditors (see **5.5.2.5.**) or receive credits at their home University for completion of courses at OIST as Visiting Students (see **5.5.2.4.**).

Special Research Students must observe OIST Graduate University rules as defined in the Graduate School Handbook and the OIST Graduate University PRP. Rules concerning Intellectual Property are separately stipulated in Chapter 14[\[link: \]](#). Special Research Students who violate the rules of the OIST Graduate University may be disqualified and have their research guidance terminated.

Special Research Students enjoy many of the same privileges of students for full-time study in the doctoral program in the University, with the exception of Financial Support, which is handled differently.

5.5.2.1.1. Students of newly-hired faculty  
Students of newly hired faculty who relocate to OIST before completion of their PhD degree may need special arrangements

to facilitate the successful completion of their PhD. If the student is able to complete their research at OIST while continuing to be enrolled at their original home institution, they can be received as Special Research Students receiving research guidance from the relocating faculty member. Such students would graduate with a degree from the home institution.

Students who desire to transfer their degree studies to the OIST Graduate University and graduate with the OIST degree must apply for admission as full-time graduate students. These candidates follow standard OIST admission procedures and selection is on a competitive basis with other applicants. Selected candidates are admitted to the OIST program and follow the OIST curriculum, according to the program outlined in Chapter 5.

#### 5.5.2.1.2. Procedures for Special Research Students

Special Research Students must be formally accepted and registered as Special Students at the OIST Graduate University in accordance with Article 43 of the University Rules [\[link: \]](#). The Graduate School must be notified of the intention to host the student by the Professor of the Research Unit in a timely manner (at least 6months prior to the expected start date). The procedure for acceptance and registration requires the student to submit the documents listed below:

- i) Application for admission as a Special Research Student (using the appropriate Form)
- ii) Recommendation letter from thesis supervisor in the partner institution
- iii) Brief outline of arrangements and plan of research at OIST from the OIST supervisor
- iv) Copy of transcript of the current degree at the home institution
- v) Brief Curriculum Vitae of the applicant
- vi) Digital image of student's photograph (on a white background) and a scan of the information page of the passport if a visa is required

In general, a written agreement with the partner institution is required to confirm the understanding of the arrangements and agreement of the partner institution. It is important that the degree requirements of the partner institution can be met at OIST. The Graduate School will complete such an agreement with the partner institution. Such an agreement may allow for mutual waiver of tuition fees. Where such an agreement does not exist, tuition fees may be charged to the student.



After acceptance of the student, the Graduate School will make a recommendation to the Research Unit concerning the conditions of financial support for the Special Research Student. The student must declare any external financial support from the partner institution or external funding agency and this will be taken into account in determining the recommended level of financial support and benefits at OIST.

If a Special Research Student is elected by OIST as a Graduate Student Research Assistant, the level of financial support and conditions of appointment are stipulated in the SRS Research Assistantship Agreement prepared by the Student Support Section. If the Special Research Student is not receiving this financial support, the conditions of appointment will be stipulated in an offer letter that will constitute the agreement between OIST and the Special Research Student after it is signed by both parties.

The host Research Unit is responsible for making travel and housing arrangements for the Special Research Student. As necessary, the Student Support Section will assist with visa processing requirements. Housing is available to Special Research Students at student rates (see above, section 5.5.2.1.3.6.).

#### 5.5.2.1.3. Financial Support for Special Research Students

No financial support is available from the Graduate School or other central fund at OIST. In some circumstances, financial support for Special Research Students may be available from the host research unit, in which case financial support for Special Research Students, including salary SRS Research Assistantship and other benefits, should be included in the budget of the host research unit. Students seeking such support must organize this with the Professor of the host research unit in advance.

The following benefits may be available to Special Research Students on the advice of the Graduate School with approval of the Dean of Research and agreement of the Professor of the host Research Unit.

##### 5.5.2.1.3.1. SRS Research Assistantship

A SRS Research Assistantship is an appointment provided to a Special Research Student in good standing who performs

research or who assists others performing research and educational activities.

Tenure of a SRS Research Assistantship is for one year, or until the thesis is submitted (whichever period is the shorter). Continued financial support depends on maintained performance in study and research with an official request from the host research Unit. SRS Research Assistantships will be discontinued in the event of unexcused absence, failure to maintain adequate academic performance, unethical behavior, or other reasons determined by the academic oversight process to be incompatible with good standing.

#### 5.5.2.1.3.2. Business travel

Approved business travel for work may be undertaken in accordance with OIST PRP Chapter 29. For the purpose of business travel, Special Research Students are considered as Category Group 5 employees. Support for such travel must come from the Research Unit, not the Graduate School.

#### 5.5.2.1. 3.3. Relocation

5.5.2.1.3.3.1. Transfer Allowance Transfer Allowance can be provided stipulated in the table below:

Domestic	36,600 yen
International	62,800 yen

Family relocation allowance:

Spouse & Child 12 years of age or older = 2/3

Child under 12 years of age = 1/3

#### 5.5.2.1.3.3.2. Relocation Expenses

Special Research Students normally receive support for round trip travel (or two one-way tickets) and no relocation expenses. However, a Special Research Student may alternatively choose to receive a one-way ticket and relocation expenses at the following rate.

	Maximum level per household
Domestic	250,000 yen*
International	500,000 yen

\*350,000 yen if transferring a car from mainland Japan

Reimbursement of relocation expenses can only be provided once.

If a Special Research Student voluntarily terminates the agreement within the first three months, OIST S.C. may request return of the total amount provided. If the termination is due to unavoidable circumstances (including family health reasons), OIST S.C. may waive the claim regarding return of the above amount.

#### 5.5.2.1.3.4. Commuting

A commuting allowance may be paid to students who live outside of campus but cannot use the OIST shuttle bus for reasons deemed valid by the Dean of the Graduate School. Details on the allowance are stipulated separately by “Rules Pertaining to a Commuting Allowance for Students”.

#### 5.5.2.1.3.5. Insurance

All Special Research Students must join the National Health Insurance scheme. They are covered by Accident Insurance for Students Pursuing Education and Research (PAS), and Liability Insurance coupled with PAS (Gakkensai and Gakkenbai) provided by Graduate School.

#### 5.5.2.1.3.6. Accommodation

Subsidized accommodation is provided for Special Research Students living in the Campus Housing. If a Special Research Student is required to live off-campus due to unavoidable circumstances, such as shortage of housing in the Campus Housing, the University may lease off-campus housing for residence of the student. (Please refer Student Rental Housing Rules.)

##### 5.5.2.1.3.6.1. On-Campus Housing

Special Research Students have access to the Campus Housing at student rates.

Apartment type	Use	Floor Area	Net Rent (Furnished)	Net Rent (Unfurnished)
1-BR	Single	45m <sup>2</sup>	21,600 yen/mth	13,600 yen/mth
2-BR	Single	70m <sup>2</sup>	80,000 yen/mth	65,000 yen/mth
2-BR	2 Share*	70m <sup>2</sup>	18,000 yen/mth*	10,500 yen/mth*
2-BR	Family	70m <sup>2</sup>	41,000 yen/mth	21,000 yen/mth

\*This applies only when both parties are registered OIST graduate students.

Minor change in rates on the order of 10% is possible.

#### 5.5.2.1.3.6.2. Off-Campus Housing

If a Special Research Student is required to live off-campus due to unavoidable circumstances, such as shortage of housing in the Campus Housing, the University may lease off-campus housing for residence of the student.

(Please refer Student Rental Housing Rules.)

#### 5.5.2.1.3.6.3. Payment

Rent, Utilities (if applicable) and other necessary costs will be deducted from the emolument of the SRS Research Assistantship. Those who do not have SRS Research Assistantship will be billed.

### 5.5.2.2. Research Interns

Previously registered, current, or intending students of another university who wish to undertake educational activity at OIST may do so as Research Interns. Research Intern placements give talented students experience working in a research setting under the direction of a Professor at OIST.

The Graduate School administers a limited number of Research Intern positions as part of its student recruitment and outreach program. Research Interns may also be supported by Research Units with approval of the Dean of the Graduate School, provided this poses no obstacles to the education and research activities of the Graduate School. Places for Research Interns are awarded four times a year on a competitive basis, with application typically six months in advance.

#### 5.5.2.2.1. Eligibility

Students enrolled at undergraduate programs in universities, colleges, junior colleges, and vocational schools in Japan or overseas, or graduates of such institutions who intend to undertake further study are eligible to apply.

Applications from students who are already in PhD programs at other universities will also be considered, but undergraduate students will receive preference for funding from the Graduate School.

The applications of high ranking applicants who are already in PhD programs will be forwarded to the Faculty for consideration of placement in research units, supported by research unit funds.

Applications from currently enrolled students must be supported by a recommendation letter from the Dean, Head of Department, or supervising professor of the program they are enrolled in.

#### 5.5.2.2.2. Application

Places for Research Interns are awarded four times a year on a competitive basis. Application must be made using the online application form in accordance with the procedures and deadlines that are posted on the OIST website [\[link\]](#). Sufficient time must be allowed for the issue of a visa and other necessary Japanese government documentation.

Selection is competitive, and depends on suitability of the intended research, a student's academic background, and available funding and space. Professors accepting students under these programs will review the student's qualifications, research capabilities, and academic training in a comprehensive manner.

#### 5.5.2.2.3 Duration

The tenure of Research Intern placement is normally less than 6 months. Under no circumstances may tenure be extended more than 1 year. Under some circumstances with approval of the Dean of the Graduate School, students may stay longer than 1 year as Special Research Students provided application to change status is made at least 6 months before starting to allow time for the necessary institutional agreement.

#### 5.5.2.2.4. Working Days and Hours

The working days are from Monday to Friday, excluding University Holidays [\[link\]](#). The working hours are from 9:00am to 5:30pm.

#### 5.5.2.2.5 Financial Support

OIST expects that such Research Interns are independently funded but provides a small internship allowance, commuting support (where necessary), and accommodation either on campus or nearby. Successful applicants will receive a taxable Internship Allowance of ¥2,400 per work day, while at OIST. No internship allowance will be paid for University Holidays [\[link\]](#), or for working days on which Research Interns work less than four hours. In addition, where necessary, OIST will also provide up to a maximum of ¥45,000 per month as a Commuting Allowance and up to a maximum of ¥3,500 per day

as Overnight Accommodation Costs (instead of provision of accommodation costs, accommodation is normally provided at no cost to the student). The Internship Allowance will be adjusted if the Research Intern has another source of financial support. There is an obligation on the Research Intern to report other sources of financial support to the Student Support Section before their arrival. The amount of other support will be taken into account in determining the level of the financial support provided by OIST.

#### 5.5.2.2.6 Leave

Research Interns may take unpaid leave during the internship provided: the total leave days number less than 10% of the total duration of the work days of the internship; the leave is approved by their supervisor; the Student Support Section is informed by submitting a leave request through the website [\[link\]](#); there is no hindrance to their research activities.

#### 5.5.2.2.7 Travel

OIST will pay for one direct round-trip travel for Research Interns between the home university or institution and the Research Unit or other facility where the internship will take place (usually Okinawa). The travel dates must be as close as possible to the term of the placement. On departure from OIST, overseas students may additionally stop over for up to 5 days (excluding weekends and Japanese holidays) as they transit through an international hub airport in Japan, at the rate of one day per week of tenure at OIST, provided that this poses no additional cost in terms of flights, and that they do so entirely at their own expense.

#### 5.5.2.2.8 Other Support

The Student Support Section of the Graduate School will provide support for Research Interns at OIST with matters such as housing, visa acquisition, insurance during their research activities, and local registration. OIST regrets that support for dependents, family members, and persons other than the student is not available. Confirmation of sufficient and appropriate insurance coverage for travel and activities is necessary.

### 5.5.2.3. Visiting Research Students

Visiting Research Students are registered students of another institution who wish to undertake a period of research at OIST under the supervision of an OIST faculty member as part of a recognized collaborative research project or some other defined research project.

#### 5.5.2.3.1. Eligibility

This category provides for students enrolled for higher degrees at other institutions and engaged in research activity who wish to come to OIST to engage in a recognized collaborative research project, or some other defined research project.

This research project must be covered by a Visiting Research Student Agreement, completed before the start of the research period. Applications to host a Visiting Research Student are approved by the Dean of the Graduate School, provided this poses no obstacles to the education and research activities of the Graduate School.

#### 5.5.2.3.2. Procedure for Visiting Research Students

Visiting Research Students must be formally accepted and registered as Special Students at the OIST Graduate University in accordance with the University Rules. The Graduate School must be notified of the intention to host the student by the Professor of the Research Unit in a timely manner. The procedure for acceptance and registration requires the student to submit the documents listed below:

- i) Application for admission as a Visiting Research Student (using the appropriate Form)
- ii) Visiting Research Student Agreement
- iii) Brief outline of arrangements and plan of research at OIST from the OIST supervisor (attachment 1 for Visiting Research Student Agreement)
- iv) Brief Curriculum Vitae of the applicant
- v) Digital Image of student's photograph
- vi) Copy of Student ID Card at home institution

#### 5.5.2.3.3 Duration

The maximum tenure of a Visiting Research Student is 364 days.

#### 5.5.2.3.4 Financial Support

Visiting Research students who are part of a collaborative research project in general bring their own funding. If necessary, the host Unit may support the visiting research student with travel, accommodation and a daily allowance, in accordance with OIST PRP Chapter 29.

#### 5.5.2.4 Visiting Students <Kamoku-Tou-Risyuusei>

Visiting Students are registered students of another university who wish to take one or more courses offered by the OIST Graduate School for credit at their home university. With the prior permission of the Dean,

who will take into account such factors as class size, such a student may enroll as a Visiting Student. Applications for admission as a Visiting Student must be received one month before the start of the course, using the appropriate form (see Forms). Credit cannot be awarded to course auditors who are not formally enrolled as Visiting Students.

Registered graduate or undergraduate students of another university who seek credit for attending OIST International Workshops and Courses may enroll in approved courses as Visiting Students. Admission of Visiting Students to OIST International Workshops and Courses is decided by the course organizers. The process for approval of International Workshops and Courses for course credits is stipulated in Section 5.3. [\[link: 5.3.\]](#).

Research Interns who intend to apply for admission to the OIST graduate program, or who have been admitted but wish to start early, may enroll for courses and receive credit at the OIST graduate university as Visiting Students. The Graduate School will provide, on request, an individual student transcript of courses completed.

#### 5.5.2.5 Course Auditors <Choukousei>

Members of the OIST community (including faculty, researchers, OIST students and special research students, research interns, administrative staff, and family members) may apply to become Course Auditors of specific courses. A formal request must be made to the Graduate School for permission to attend classes (see Forms). Where the presence of Course Auditors or their different level of background knowledge would impact on the quality of teaching of regular students, we reserve the right to decline such requests. The Professor in charge of a course has the final word on accepting Course Auditors and the behavior expected of them. An Auditing Student may attend and participate as a normal student. The Graduate School does not award credit or recognition for courses attended. Course Auditors are required to attend regularly so as not to disturb class numbers. At the discretion of the Professor in charge of a course, they may submit work for grading along with regular students. Information concerning current classes, times, and locations is available on the Graduate School website [\[link: \]](#).

#### 5.5.2.6. Junior Research Fellows

Junior Research Fellows are the students whose thesis supervisor requests a continuation of their research project after the degree conferral at OIST.

Students in this category are registered as Special Students. The



duration is up to a maximum of 6 months. Under no conditions can this be extended beyond 6 months by the use of subsidy funding or external grants, provided that, students who have time remaining more than 6 months on a JSPS DC Fellowship are permitted to continue until the end date of the Fellowship. A concrete research plan approved by their thesis supervisor and the Dean of the Graduate School is required.

Financial support for Junior Research Fellows may be available from the host research unit. Financial support for Junior Research Fellows, including fellowship and other benefits, should be included in the budget of the host research unit. Students seeking such support must organize this with their thesis supervisor in advance.

Junior Research Fellows enjoy many of the same privileges students for full-time study in the doctoral program in the University, with the exception of Financial Support, which is handled differently.

Appointment to a postdoctoral position at OIST is not permitted for OIST PhD students within 2 years of the last day of their studentship at OIST.

#### 5.5.2.6.1. Procedures for Junior Research Fellows

Junior Research Fellows must be formally accepted and registered as Special Student at the OIST Graduate University in accordance with Article 43 of the University Rules. The Graduate School must be notified of the intention to host the student by their thesis supervisor (preferably 3 months prior to the expected start date and at least 1 month prior to the start date). The procedure for acceptance and registration requires that the student submits the documents listed below:

- i) Application for admission as a Junior Research Fellow (using the designated Form)
- ii) Recommendation letter from thesis supervisor
- iii) Brief outline of arrangements and plan of research from thesis supervisor
- iv) Clear plan for employment after termination.

After acceptance of the student, the Graduate School will make a recommendation to the thesis supervisor concerning the conditions of financial support for the Junior Research Fellow. The student must declare any external financial support from funding agency and this will be taken into account in determining the recommended level of financial support and benefits at OIST.

If a student is admitted by OIST as a Junior Research Fellow, the level

of financial support and conditions are stipulated in the Junior Research Fellowship Agreement prepared by the Student Support Section. If the Junior Research Fellow is not receiving this financial support, the conditions of appointment will be stipulated in an offer letter that will constitute the agreement between OIST and the Junior Research Fellows after it is signed by both parties.

#### 5.5.2.6.2. Financial Support for Junior Research Fellows

A Junior Research Fellowship is an appointment provided to a Junior Research Fellow whose thesis supervisor acknowledges the necessity to continue their time for completion of matters required for conclusion of the research project after the degree conferral for up to 6 months.

##### 5.5.2.6.2.1. Junior Research Fellowship

A Junior Research Fellowship is an appointment provided to a Junior Research Fellow whose thesis supervisor acknowledges the necessity to continue their time for completion of matters required for conclusion of the research project after the degree conferral for up to 6 months.

##### 5.5.2.6.2.2. Business travel

Approved business travel for work may be undertaken in accordance with OIST PRP Chapter 29. For the purpose of business travel, Junior Research Fellows are considered as Category Group 5. Support for such travel must come from the Research Unit.

##### 5.5.2.6.2.3. Commuting Allowance

A commuting allowance may be paid to students who live outside of campus but cannot use the OIST shuttle bus for reasons deemed valid by the Dean of the Graduate School. Details on the allowance are stipulated separately by “Rules Pertaining to a Commuting Allowance for Students”

##### 5.5.2.6.2.4. Insurance

All Junior Research Fellows must join the National Health Insurance scheme. They are covered by Accident Insurance for Students Pursuing Education and Research (PAS), and Liability Insurance coupled with PAS (Gakkensai and Gakkenbai) provided by Graduate School.

##### 5.5.2.6.2.5. Accommodation

The Graduate School continues to provide the current subsidized apartment at student rates to Junior Research Fellows until the end of their Junior Research Fellow status. Rent, Utilities (if applicable) and other necessary costs will be deducted from the emolument of the Junior Research Fellowship. Those who do not have Junior Research Fellowship will be billed.

## **5.6. Improvement of education**

### **5.6.1. Basic Policy of Faculty Development**

The Graduate University must maintain and improve the quality of its Faculty in order to provide an outstanding education at OIST and to meet the different educational needs of each student. The Graduate School will play an active role in the development of faculty members by implementing programs for faculty development in teaching and supervision of graduate students.

### **5.6.2. Methods**

Specifically, the Graduate University will conduct the following:

#### **5.6.2.1. Teaching Guidelines**

The Faculty Development section of the Office of the Dean of the Graduate School will create, maintain and distribute guidelines for quality teaching to ensure uniform best-practice teaching standards are observed at OIST.

#### **5.6.2.2. Student Teaching Evaluations**

Students will evaluate each course at the end of the course. The results of such evaluations will be distributed to the teacher, and will also be available to students. The student responses to a standard subset of questions will be reported to the Office of the Dean of the Graduate School. The Faculty Development section of the Office of the Dean of the Graduate School will assist the teacher to respond appropriately to this feedback.

#### **5.6.2.3. Peer Review of Teaching**

Faculty members will support the development of their colleagues by participating from time to time as classroom observers, with the agreement of the teacher. The date of such observation will be reported to the Office of the Dean of the Graduate School, and the observer will discuss their observations with the teacher in a collegial and supportive manner.

#### **5.6.2.4. Teacher Training**

The Faculty Development section will arrange training sessions, and workshops for faculty development from suitably qualified facilitators, in order to enhance the teaching ability of OIST Faculty members.

#### **5.6.2.5. Mentoring**

A mentoring system will be established so that faculty with less experience in teaching and thesis supervision can meet with more experienced faculty to receive advice and support. As a part of this system the Thesis Committee supervising each student will include junior and

senior Faculty members to facilitate the transfer of skills relating to supervision of research.

The Faculty Development section will implement these methods to ensure the improvement of the education and research of the Graduate University.

### **5.7. Library**

Reference to the chapter 6 University Library [\[link: 6\]](#)

### **5.8. Computers**

OIST PhD Students will be provided with a standard laptop computer adequate for their basic needs for communication, coursework and thesis writing during their time at OIST. Research units are to provide for any additional computer needs as required for the students' research during lab rotations and/or their thesis research if students' supervisors deem it necessary.

Use of the Graduate School issued computers must conform with the chapter 17 Information Technology and Security [\[link: 6\]](#).

### **5.9. Administrative rules**

#### **5.9.1. Academic progression requirements**

The OIST Graduate University is committed to early identification and support of students who are not meeting academic progression requirements, and to maintaining academic standards of students in the PhD program.

##### **5.9.1.1 Identification of unsatisfactory academic progress**

The Curriculum and Examination Committee annually reviews the academic records of all students. Students who show signs of not meeting academic progression requirements are identified by review of course and rotation evaluations, conducted by the Dean of the Graduate School at the end of each term, or by the PhD Thesis Committees on the basis of annual progress reports. The Dean of the Graduate School notifies the Committee of any students who are failing to meet academic progression requirements. Students who are not meeting progression requirements are alerted by the Dean of the Graduate School and provided assistance to address issues affecting progress.

Satisfactory academic progression requires:

1. A level of performance in courses and rotations meeting all of the following criteria:

- i. Completing an approved program of elective coursework with at least a “Pass” evaluation in all courses, at a rate sufficient to meet the cumulative credit requirements for progression to thesis research and graduation;
- ii. Completing all compulsory coursework with at least a “Pass” evaluation;
- iii. Completing all required rotations with at least a “Pass” evaluation;
- iv. Achieving overall satisfactory progress as determined in annual evaluation by the Curriculum and Examinations Committee. The Curriculum and Examinations Committee may require a minimal evaluation higher than a “Pass” in the overall academic performance of the student.

2. Satisfactory progress in research defined by the following criteria:

- i. Timely development by the student of research goals that can be realized at the OIST Graduate University.
- ii. Submission of a Thesis Proposal within nine months of commencing Preliminary Thesis Research.
- iii. Passing the qualifying examination for advancement to candidacy within twelve months of commencing Preliminary Thesis Research.
- iv. Satisfactory Annual Progress Reports
- v. Completion of the PhD thesis within five years of commencing the program

Unsatisfactory academic progress is defined as failure to meet any of the criteria listed above, as determined by the Curriculum and Examinations Committee.

In the case of established unsatisfactory academic progress the Committee may recommend probation or termination of candidacy.

Probation is an option if satisfactory progress can be achieved by (a) repeating and passing a failed unit (course or rotation); or, (b) substituting and passing an approved alternative unit. If the Committee recommends probation the Dean of the Graduate School alerts the student and explains the conditions the student must meet for satisfactory academic progress.

Discontinuation is applied if a student fails a repeated or substituted course or rotation, or fails to make satisfactory progress in research.

#### **5.9.2. Discontinuation of studies**

Discontinuation for unsatisfactory academic progress

Students in the PhD program may be discontinued for unsatisfactory academic progress. In such cases the Dean of the Graduate School may order the discontinuation of that student upon obtaining permission from the President, and with endorsement of the decision by the Curriculum and Examinations Committee.

### **5.10. Committees of the Graduate School**

#### **5.10.1. Admissions Committee**

The Admissions Committee is a standing committee of the University with delegated authority from the Faculty Assembly to select students for admission to the PhD program, and is advisory to the Dean of the Graduate School. The main purpose of the Admissions Committee is to deliberate and advise on matters related to graduate student recruitment and admissions, to ensure the recruitment and selection of excellent students. It has a particular role in the selection of individual candidates for admission to the graduate program. The Admissions Committee reports to the Assembly through the Dean of the Graduate School.

##### **5.10.1.1. Membership of the Committee**

The Committee includes faculty members representing the major fields of research and education at OIST who are charged with providing advice on matters requiring academic input. The Dean of the Graduate School appoints Committee members. The Dean of Research, Manager, Academic Services Section, and Manager, Student Support Section are

ex-officio members of the Committee. The Academic Services section provides administrative support for the Committee.

5.10.1.2. Chairperson of the Committee

The Dean of the Graduate School shall preside at meetings of the Committee.

5.10.1.3. Frequency of convocation

The Chairperson will call meetings of the Committee at least two times per year.

5.10.1.4. Items to be discussed at meetings of the Committee

The Committee may consider specific matters as follows:

- i Graduate student admissions
- ii Graduate student recruiting
- iii Other matters

The Committee may also deliberate on policy matters in relation to admissions.

5.10.1.5. Meetings of the Committee

- i If there is not a majority of the members with voting rights in attendance, the Committee shall not transact its business.
- ii Resolutions of the Committee shall be passed by a majority. The Chairperson shall make a decision in case of tie in votes
- iii As deemed necessary by the Chairperson members may participate in the Committee meeting by teleconference and exercise voting rights. Absent members may not exercise voting rights.
- iv As deemed necessary by the Chairperson faculty members other than members of the Committee may be invited to attend the meeting and participate in proceedings or serve as advisors on panels. This may occur, for example, to ensure that certain fields of expertise are represented, or to achieve diversity.
- v The agenda and decisions of the Committee shall be made available to all Faculty Assembly members.
- vi The Committee shall include a member who is charged with ensuring that issues of diversity and equal opportunity are properly addressed. This shall be a trained member of staff from the diversity office or a member of the committee who has received appropriate training.
- vii Members of the committee or panels must declare conflicts of interest or the appearance of a conflict when these exist. Conflicts of interest occur when a candidate has any of the following relationships to the Committee member or advisor:

- (a) Former or present student;
- (b) Student for whom the member has written a supporting letter;
- (c) Former or current business partner or employer;
- (d) Close friend or partner;
- (e) Family member (spouse, child, sibling, sibling of spouse or child of sibling).

The existence of a conflict of interest is not a barrier to the selection of a candidate. However, special procedures must be followed to ensure the integrity of the process and the fair treatment of the candidate.

5.10.1.6. Procedures for dealing with a conflict of interest

Prior to a committee meeting in which a member of the Committee or advisor has a conflict of interest, the committee member having a conflict of interest shall disclose all facts that are relevant to the conflict of interest. Such disclosure shall be reflected in the minutes of the meeting. If a committee member is aware that members or advisors have a conflict of interest, they shall disclose the relevant facts. If an undeclared conflict of interest is discovered and the procedures have not been followed the matter shall be referred to the President, who will determine the course of action to be taken in response.

Conflict of Interest in Relation to Applicants Who Are Family Members

There is no barrier to the candidacy or selection of a candidate who is a family member provided that proper procedures are followed. In the case of a family member, the conflict of interest shall be declared in writing to the Chairperson of the Admissions Committee. The committee member or advisor concerned shall thereafter take no part in the evaluations of any candidates or the decisions of the committee, and shall not have access to the proceedings and records of the committee, with respect to any other candidate, until a decision about the candidate who is a family member has been made.

The written declaration shall include the date of the declaration, the name of the committee member, the name of the candidate, and the nature of the relationship of the committee member to the candidate. The declaration shall include the following statement:

“I hereby recuse myself from any evaluation or decisions concerning the above candidate, and any other candidate in the same round of applications, immediately and until a decision about the above candidate has been made.”



### Other Conflicts of Interest

In the case of other conflicts of interest, the conflict shall be declared to the Chairperson, who shall ensure that the committee member concerned takes no part in the decision of the committee with respect to the candidate, by requiring the member to leave the room when the candidate is discussed, or stronger measures as considered necessary by the Chairperson.

#### **5.10.2. Curriculum and Examinations Committee**

The Curriculum and Examinations Committee is a standing committee of the University with delegated authority from the Faculty Assembly to deal with matters related to the curriculum and individual student progress in the PhD program, and is advisory to the Dean of the Graduate School. The Curriculum and Examinations Committee reports to the Assembly through the Dean of the Graduate School.

##### **5.10.2.1. Membership of the Committee**

The Committee includes faculty members representing the major fields of research and education at OIST who are charged with providing advice on matters requiring academic input. The Dean of the Graduate School appoints Committee members. The Dean of Research, Manager, Academic Services Section, and Manager, Student Support Section are ex-officio members of the Committee. The Academic Services section provides administrative support for the Committee.

##### **5.10.2.2. Chairperson of the Committee**

The Dean of the Graduate School shall preside at meetings of the Committee.

##### **5.10.2.3. Frequency of convocation**

The Chairperson will call meetings of the Committee on the First Monday of every second month.

##### **5.10.2.4. Attendance at meetings**

Since a majority of the members with voting rights is required for a quorum, voting members of the committee who miss three successive regularly scheduled meetings, or who miss five or more of the regularly scheduled meetings in a calendar year, will automatically be discharged from the committee, with the following exceptions: members who attend electronically, members who submit written comments on agenda items, members who are scheduled to teach at the time of the meeting.

##### **5.10.2.5. Items to be discussed at meetings of the Committee**

The Committee deliberates on matters related to the curriculum and individual student progress in the PhD program.

The committee deals with:

- Individual student program (by review of program proposals)
- Individual student progress (by review of annual progress reports)
- Approval of thesis proposals and progression to thesis research
- Appointment of thesis supervisor and thesis committee
- Appointment of examiners
- Award of degrees
- Changes to the curriculum (by review of course proposals)
- Other matters related to curriculum and student progress

#### 5.10.2.6. Meetings of the Committee

- i. If there is not a majority of the members with voting rights in attendance, the Committee shall not transact its business.
- ii. Resolutions of the Committee shall be passed by a majority. The Chairperson shall make a decision in case of tie in votes
- iii. As deemed necessary by the Chairperson members may participate in the Committee meeting by teleconference and exercise voting rights. Absent members may not exercise voting rights.
- iv. As deemed necessary by the Chairperson faculty members other than members of the Committee may be invited to attend the meeting and participate in proceedings or serve as advisors on panels. This may occur, for example, to ensure that certain fields of expertise are represented, or to achieve diversity.
- v. The agenda and decisions of the Committee shall be made available to the Faculty Assembly.
- vi. Members of the committee or panels must declare conflicts of interest or the appearance of a conflict when these exist.

#### 5.10.2.7. Procedures for dealing with a conflict of interest

In the case of conflicts of interest, the conflict shall be declared to the Chairperson, who shall ensure that the committee member concerned takes no part in the decision of the committee with respect to the matter, by requiring the member to leave the room when the matter is discussed, or stronger measures as considered necessary by the Chairperson.

### 5.11. Teaching Spaces and Resources Management

Graduate School spaces and resources will be made available for use by the OIST Community for the purpose of teaching and learning in line with the OIST Teaching Labs Facility & Resource Use Policy. [\[link to full policy “https://groups.oist.jp/sites/default/files/imce/u137/Forms/OIST%20Teaching%20Labs%20Facility%20Use%20Policy%20%282%29.docx”\]](https://groups.oist.jp/sites/default/files/imce/u137/Forms/OIST%20Teaching%20Labs%20Facility%20Use%20Policy%20%282%29.docx)

Graduate School teaching spaces are intended to support teaching and learning at OIST. Priority is given to use in official Graduate School courses and other Graduate School sponsored trainings and events. When a space is not in use, it may be booked and used with prior approval of the Graduate School.

