

[Program Overview]
OIST's Visiting Program (TSVP)

April 1, 2024 (v 2.0)

Overview: This program will be sponsored and administered by the Office of the Dean of Research. The program's objective is to contribute to a vibrant research community at OIST. Visiting programs contribute strongly to the visibility, reputation, and intellectual life of the institutions which host them, and greatly enhance what can be accomplished through a small number of permanent faculty, especially in terms of range and number of publications. OIST, with its attractive, but remote location, and small number of faculty in any given discipline, is ideally placed for hosting a visiting program, with a broad, cross-disciplinary nature. A unique aspect of the TSVP at OIST is that it spans all sciences including the arts and humanities. The program currently consists of four parts: Thematic Programs, Theoretical Visiting Scholars, Experimental Visiting Scholars, and Domestic Visitors.

Thematic Programs (TP): Hosted by a group of two or more researchers ("coordinators") who stay at OIST for 2 weeks to 3 months. Additional participants can be invited during the TP's duration, 4-8 of whom are expected to be present at any one time. Where it fits the goals and timeframe of the program, a symposium linked to the program can be hosted at OIST.

Theoretical Visiting Scholars (TVS): Open to candidates pursuing independent research in theoretical projects, usually staying at OIST for 3 to 12 months.

Experimental Visiting Scholars (EVS): This program emphasizes novel and innovative approaches in research by inviting senior faculty to spend their sabbatical time at OIST. Each visitor requires a host unit at OIST, in order to allow access to experimental lab areas.

Domestic Visitors (DV): Like the VS open to candidates pursuing independent research, but only to those working within Japan. Visits are between 2 weeks and 3 months, visits may be split into several trips within one fiscal year. Domestic Visitors are provided on-campus housing and office space, but are usually expected to cover their own travel expenses.

Eligibility: Applicants should hold a Ph.D. in a relevant field and be independent researchers, i.e., should have an academic standing equivalent to senior postdoc, junior group leader, or faculty member at a research-intensive institution. Exceptions can be made for scientists with a proven potential to soon become independent researchers.

Note: Previously accepted candidates may apply for another visit.

Duration:

- Thematic Programs (TP): 2 weeks to 3 months
- Visiting Scholars (VS): usually 3 months to 12 months
- Domestic Visitors (DV): usually 2 weeks to 3 months, can be split into several trips

Balance of Fields:

- Candidates from all fields (including the arts and humanities) may apply to the Visiting Program. Consideration shall be given to balance the number of candidates from various areas of research.
- As the Visiting Program is a core facility for theoretical researchers at OIST, visitors with a background in related fields should make up the majority of Visiting Scholars.

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Expenses covered by OIST for invitees:

- On-campus housing
- Travel costs (usually a round-trip airfare between the home institution and OIST)
- Daily allowance (OIST per diem)
- In exceptional situations, successful applicants (VS) or coordinators (TP) may be able to apply for support with salary, where this is necessary to facilitate the visit, and they can provide evidence of their need.
- Office space
- Access to OIST's IT system, library, and research facilities
- TP: Symposium/workshop expenses (where applicable)
- *Note:* For Domestic Visitors (DV) travel costs and per diem are usually *not* provided. In exceptional situations, where the applicant does not receive any travel support from grants or their home institution, successful candidates may apply for travel support from OIST, where this is necessary to facilitate the visit.

Application documents:

- CV including a list of publications (in the case of TP: of all coordinators)
- VS and DV: Brief description of research to date, and proposed research during the visit to OIST, including the research units the applicant is interested in interacting with
- DV: (short) statements of support from two OIST Principal Investigators
- TP: Proposal containing the theme of the program, its intellectual background, and the opportunity for progress in this area.
- TP: A list of researchers who would be willing, in principle, to participate in the program, if funded. While the scope of the Thematic Program should be theoretical, a diverse base of participants is encouraged, which may include experimental scientists.
- TP (where applicable): A title and abstract for a linked symposium of up to 60 participants

Evaluation criteria:

1. Scientific quality
2. Benefit to OIST, e.g. through interactions with and across OIST Units
3. Interdisciplinary nature of OIST
4. Considerations of diversity and ensuring a spread of academic career stages
5. Planned outreach and teaching activity, e.g. general-audience lectures, seminars, (mini) courses, career talks, activities for children/at schools

Selection:

A selection committee (Visitor Selection Committee, VSC) composed of OIST faculty, appointed by the Dean of Research (DR), will review applications for Visiting Scholars (VS) and Domestic Visitors (DV). In the case of DV the review process may be conducted through email. Solitary cases of candidates from strategic partners may be handled directly by the DR. A separate committee (International Steering Committee, ISC) composed of OIST faculty and external experts, also appointed by the DR, will review Thematic Program proposals and oversee the visiting program. Careful consideration is given to avoid conflict of interest.

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Selection process:

1. The applications/proposals will be screened by the Office of the Dean of Research to eliminate incomplete packages.
2. Complete applications/proposals will be distributed to the respective selection committees and evaluated according to the evaluation criteria
3. Shortlisted candidates may be interviewed by OIST Faculty, Committee members, or OIST staff.
4. The respective committee will finalize and rank the candidates (VS, DV) and proposals (TP). TP will be hosted and visitors will be invited in accordance with the ranking and availability of funding.
5. After VS and TP are scheduled, time slots with available housing may be used to invite DV.

TSVP Affiliates

OIST PIs may nominate their visitor as "TSVP Affiliate". To encourage inter-unit and interdisciplinary collaborations, it is required that a researcher nominated as TSVP Affiliate has two or more units of interest at OIST. The travel and living costs of Affiliates must be fully financially supported by the inviting unit. Affiliates are not to be confused with the Visiting Program's long-term Visiting Scholars, Domestic Visitors, and Thematic Program Participants, who underwent a selection process.

If a Visiting Scholar wishes to nominate an Affiliate (e.g. members or students of their group), they are asked to contact TSVP after they have accepted their invitation. The minimum stay for such Affiliates is two weeks; this period must be within the Visiting Scholar's own term of appointment. The travel and living costs of Affiliates must be fully financially supported from their home institution or grants, i.e. an Affiliate's visit should not incur any additional costs for the Visiting Program.

Process:

- 1) Eligibility: Only visitors planning to work with two or more OIST research units, OR already affiliated with the Visiting Program (e.g. TSVP alumni, students and researchers working with TSVP Visiting Scholars, former guests of the Math program, etc.)
- 2) Nomination by hosting OIST PI, or TSVP Visiting Scholar
- 3) Selection: Two members of the VSC are asked to evaluate the nominee. If necessary, additional committee members may be consulted.
- 4) Benefits: Visiting Program facilitates interactions at OIST, Office in the Visiting Program area, where possible administrative support. OIST email account may be granted if the visit is more than 4 weeks.

TSVP Housing can be requested if there is an availability: usually rent will be paid by the unit, however if circumstances require it the TSVP may decide to provide it free of charge.

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Duties of the Visitors

All TSVP visitors (including Affiliates) are expected to actively contribute to the interdisciplinary research environment at OIST and its research output. TSVP Visitors have are encouraged to freely engage with researchers and students from any research units and groups at OIST.

The TSVP/OIST shall be listed as one of the visitor's affiliations when publishing results from research (partially) conducted during the term of appointment at OIST.

Affiliation:

Theoretical Sciences Visiting Program (TSVP), Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology Graduate University, Onna, 904-0495, Japan

Acknowledgement:

This research was conducted while visiting the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology (OIST) through the Theoretical Sciences Visiting Program (TSVP).

Alternative and previously used names/affiliations of OIST's Visiting Program(s):

- Theoretical Sciences Visiting Program (TSVP)
- Experimental Visiting Scholar Program (EVSP)
- Visiting Mathematics Professor Program (Math Program) – until 2020
- Transdisciplinary Scholars Visiting Program (TSVP)
- An Okinawan name for the Visiting Program is currently being considered, e.g. Manuchun or Manuchi (=Invite or Invitation)