

Frequently Asked Questions

□ Please be sure to read the questions below to get a better understanding of your relocation process.

Time	Subjects	Questions
Prior to Arrival	Certificate of Eligibility VISA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ How long does the CoE take to be issued? □ Can I apply for a visa while I am on a business trip to a different country? □ Can you support my family members' visas? □ Should I apply for a multiple visa because I know I will be out of Japan sometimes during my stay? □ I have an unmarried partner coming along. Will you arrange her/his CoE? □ My wife/husband will come to Okinawa later. How can I arrange for her/his visa?
	Shipping Movers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ I do not plan to ship anything, so can I use the moving allowance for buying furniture and appliances once I arrive in Okinawa instead? □ I only have a couple of boxes to be sent. Can I send them by postal service and get reimbursed? □ Can I arrange a local mover by myself and get reimbursed? □ How long does air/sea shipment take to get to Okinawa? □ Can you pay for my extra/overweight baggage charge at the airport? □ Can I use both by air and by sea shipments? □ Mover asked the sending address. What address should I tell them? □ Is there anything I cannot send to Okinawa under the OIST regulation?
	Flight Arrangement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ When can you book my flights? □ I would like you to book the flight schedule I provide you. □ I would like to stop over in Tokyo for several days before coming to Okinawa. □ Can I book my flights by myself and get reimbursed? □ Can I get a round trip ticket since one way and round-trip tickets are the same cost? I can pay the difference if round trip is more expensive. □ I would like you to book the same flight as my partner's / friend's. □ I would like to come with my pet. Will OIST pay for the flight accordingly?
	Money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ How much money/cash should I bring to Japan? □ Can I transfer money from my account to Japanese one once I arrive in Japan? □ Is it possible to withdraw cash in Okinawa with my credit card? □ What is the Arrival Allowance for? And when can I receive it? □ Can I change Traveler's Check into cash in Okinawa?
	International Driving Permit (IDP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Can I drive with my current IDP in Japan? □ Should I obtain the IDP even if I am not planning to drive in Japan?
After Arrival	Upon Arrival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ How can I arrange my temporal accommodation in Okinawa, and how can I get there once I arrive at the airport? □ Are there any places I can buy food around my temporal accommodation? □ Is the Internet available in my temporal accommodation?
	Housing in Okinawa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Can I apply for OIST campus before coming to Okinawa? □ How can I find a house/apartment off campus? □ Is it possible to book the apartment before I come to Okinawa? □ How much is the average living expense for a month? □ Will the Relocation Team help me to complete the process of my lease contract? □ How does the Housing Allowance work once I have a permanent residence? □ How long will the relocation Team support my "relocation"?
	Phones Internet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ I want to buy a new phone in Japan. How can I do that? □ I have a phone and want to use it with Japanese SIM. Is it possible? □ How can I have the Internet at home
	Driving in Japan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ I would like to drive in Japan. What do I have to have? □ Can I rent a car as soon as I arrive? And how can I arrange for that? □ I would like to buy a car. Will you give me information or field support?

Certificate of Eligibility & VISA

Q: How long does the CoE take to be issued?

A: It depends on your nationality and your visa status; however, it usually takes about 3 to 4 weeks to be issued.

Q: Can I apply for a visa while I am on a business trip to a different country?

A: You can apply your visa in the country of your residence or in the country of your nationality.

Q: Can you support my family members' visas?

A: Yes, OIST supports your family members' visas if they are relocating with you or within three months from the CoE issuance. If your family members will relocate later than three months from the CoE issuance date, you will need to apply their CoEs once you arrive in Okinawa.

Q: Should I apply for a multiple visa because I know I will be out of Japan sometimes during my stay?

A: This is not necessary. Once you enter Japan with the provided visa, your legal residence is guaranteed during the period of stay on your Residence Card, which is either given to you at major airports or delivered to your registered address.

Q: I have an unmarried partner coming along. Will you arrange her/him the CoE?

A: We can't arrange your partner's CoE or visa because Japanese government doesn't issue dependent visas for unmarried partners even though some couples are regarded as common-law marriage in certain countries. In order to apply for dependent visas, you have to prove your marriage with official documents clearly stating your marriage status.

Q: My wife/husband will come to Okinawa later. How can I arrange for her/his visa?

A: We can arrange the CoE for both of you at the same time as long as she/he is expected to come to Japan within three months. Since the CoE is valid for only three months, if she/he is likely to come three months later than issued date, you'll need to apply for spouse visa once you arrive in Japan.

Shipping & Movers

Q: I do not plan to ship anything. Can I use the moving allowance for buying furniture and appliances once I arrive in Okinawa instead?

A: No. The moving allowance is only used for your household shipments. OIST does not provide the moving allowance for purchasing things in Okinawa.

Q: I only have a couple of boxes to send. Can I send them by postal service and get reimbursed?

A: No. Even if your shipment is small, we ask you to use a mover. Movers can survey through email or telephone for small shipments without visiting your place.

Q: Can I arrange a local mover by myself and get reimbursed?

A: No. Fundamentally OIST cannot reimburse a moving cost. The Relocation Team contacts at least two moving companies for quotations. The least expensive company will be selected.

Q: How long does air/sea shipment take to get to Okinawa?

A: It depends on where your shipment is from. Usually from Europe/US, it takes about 3 to 4 weeks by air and 6 to more months by sea.

Q: Can you pay for my extra/overweight baggage charge at the airport?

A: No, we cannot reimburse your extra/overweight baggage charge, so please arrange your shipping carefully with the mover.

Q: Can I use both by air and by sea shipments?

A: Yes. If the total cost of shipments are within the OIST allowance limit, you can use both air and sea shipments.

Q: Mover asked the sending address. What address should I tell them?

A: Movers are usually informed to use the OIST campus address as a temporary shipping address. If they ask you to reconfirm the shipping address, please tell them the following address. 1919-1 Tancha, Onna-son, Kunigami-gun, Okinawa 904-0495 JAPAN.
Once your shipments arrive in mainland Japan and go through a custom clearance, the mover will contact you for a delivery address.

Q: Is there anything that I cannot send to Okinawa under the OIST regulations?

A: Basically, we can only bare the shipping cost of household goods and daily necessities. In case some items such as antiques need extra insurance or shipping cost, we may ask you to send them separately at your own cost. Food or Food product is not regarded as daily necessities, so please do not include it in your shipment.
If you are unable to distinguish the transportable from the non-transportable, please contact the Relocation Team to ask for advice.

Flight arrangement

Q: When can you book my flights?

A: Fundamentally the Relocation Team books your flights after we confirm your visa issuance and the mover is selected.

Q: I would like you to book the flight schedule I provide you.

A: The Relocation Team books your flights in accordance with the OIST relocation travel regulation. You can provide us the schedule, however, we cannot guarantee you to book the same flights.

Q: I would like to stop over in Tokyo for several days before coming to Okinawa.

A: OIST only provides the direct flight from the closest airport to your residence or working place to Okinawa, Japan. If you would like to stop over in Tokyo or any other cities when such request is deemed as appropriate by Vice President for Human Resource. You will have to bear any difference of the travel itinerary with and without stopover of the air ticket from origin of relocation to Okinawa.

Q: Can I book my flights by myself and get reimbursed?

A: Fundamentally the Relocation Team books your flights in accordance with the relocation travel regulation.

Q: Can I get a round trip ticket since one way and round trip tickets are the same cost. I can pay the difference if round trip is more expensive.

A: OIST only provides you the one-way ticket to Okinawa. We cannot provide a round trip tickets.

Q: I would like you to book the same flight as my partner's (friend's).

A: If you give us the desired flight information, we can book one for you. But we have to compare the price with that of the similar flights, and if your flight is more expensive than the other flights, we ask you to bear the excess cost from the cheapest flight.

Q: I would like to come with my pet. Will OIST pay for the flight accordingly?

A: Relocation Team will book the flight in accordance with OIST relocation travel regulation, however, if you have preferred flight according to your pets on-board, you will have to bear the excess cost from the suggested flight. there are certain regulations for bringing your pets to Japan. Please check the regulation in [Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries](#) website.

Money

Q: How much money/cash should I bring to Japan?

A: The biggest expense within your first month is for housing. When you rent an apartment/house, you are requested to pay for various fees such as advance rent, deposit, commission fee, key money, fire insurance and others. If you are thinking to use a car, it's probably better to bring enough cash because the payment is made only by cash, not credit card. The "Initial Cost Chart" helps you to estimate how much money you will spend for the first month.

Q: Can I transfer money from my account to Japanese account once I arrive in Japan?

A: Yes, you can. We will support you to open your bank account at the same time of your residence registration and provide you the information of the bank.

Q: Is it possible to withdraw cash with my credit card in Japan?

A: It is possible only at JP bank ATM machine, but there is an upper limit of the amount you can withdraw in one day. It varies depending on your credit card company. Please contact the credit card company if you are using this service.

Q: What is the Arrival Allowance for? And when can I receive it?

A: Arrival Allowance, which is described in the Relocation Flow in the first e-mail from the Relocation Team, is to cover various expenses related to your relocation. Your lodging fee at the temporal accommodation and other necessary expenses are drawn automatically from the allowance as each day passes. The remaining of the allowance is usually transferred to your bank account 4 - 8 weeks after you get your permanent residence. There is no restriction to use once you receive it.

Q: Can I change Traveler's Check into cash in Okinawa?

A: Unfortunately, most of the Japanese banks stopped the exchanging service. Travelex Naha branch is the only place you can exchange Traveler's Check in Okinawa, but it limits the maximum amount to 500 \$/€/£ in one day.

International Driving Permit

Q: Can I drive with my current International Driving Permit in Japan?

A: Japan is a member country of "1949 Geneva Convention on Road Traffic", so if your IDP is the same kind, you can drive in Japan. Please be advised that IDP ratified by "1968 Vienna Convention on Road Traffic" is not valid in Japan.

(http://www.keishicho.metro.tokyo.jp/multilingual/english/traffic_safety/drivers_licenses/geneva.html)

However, if your licenses are issued in Monaco, Slovenia, Belgium, France, Germany, Switzerland, or Taiwan, you can drive with an official Japanese translation of your foreign license for one year.

The translation service is available at JAF (Japan Automobile Federation).

Q: Should I obtain the IDP even if I am not planning to drive in Japan?

A: Okinawa, especially in middle-north area, is a car-dependent society. Public buses are available as the public transportation, but its frequency and coverage area are not very satisfactory. So, this may change your original plan of no driving. If your stay in Okinawa is going to be a long one like a year or more, obtaining your IDP is recommended.

Upon Arrival

Q: How can I arrange my temporal accommodation in Okinawa, and how can I get there once I arrive at the airport?

A: The Relocation Team will inform you of the temporal accommodation as soon as we arrange a suitable one for you. The lodging fee is automatically deducted from your relocation allowance. We also arrange a taxi for you to move from Naha Airport to your accommodation. The driver usually waits for you at the arrival gate holding your name board.

Q: Are there any places that I can buy food around my temporal accommodation?

A: If your accommodation is in OIST campus, there is a convenience store called AEON on the 1st floor of Village Center. It opens from 08:00-20:00 include Saturday or Sunday. In case OIST campus is full, we usually arrange the one which is conveniently located nearby stores.

Q: Is the Internet available in my temporal accommodation?

A: We usually allocate rooms with Internet for new arrivals, but the number of those rooms is limited, so we may not be able to book one with Internet for you in the busiest time. However, you can borrow a mobile wi-fi router for 2 weeks upon your request.

Housing in Okinawa

Q: Can I apply for OIST campus before coming to Okinawa?

A: If you are an academic member of the OIST population, you are eligible to apply for residence in on-campus housing even before coming to Okinawa. There are 1, 2, and 3LDK furnished and unfurnished apartments on our campus. If you are interested in living on campus, please contact the Housing Management Section (housing@oist.jp) for availability. Here is the link to the detail.: [Housing](#)

Since we are currently receiving a far greater demand than the campus capacity, hence we are afraid that it could take more than a few years for us to fulfill your campus housing request. (May2017)

Q: How can I find a house/apartment off campus?

A: You can provide your preference of the permanent accommodation in the Relocation Data Sheet and exchange information between us. We start searching for available ones based on your information approximately 2 - 3 weeks before your arrival. Then we arrange house hunting tours.

Q: Is it possible to book the apartment before I come to Okinawa?

A: It is basically NO. Because Japanese housing agencies don't reserve it for more than several days. They as well as we also strongly recommend you see it on site before signing the lease contract to avoid the misunderstanding leading to potential trouble source.

Q: How much is the average living expense for a month?

A: It all depends on various factors. Please refer to "Initial Cost Chart".

Q: Will the relocation team help me to complete the process of my lease contract?

A: We do our best to make it as less stressful as possible. We usually work between you and the housing agency by providing with language support and useful information.

Q: How does the Housing Allowance work once I have a permanent residence?

A: Housing Allowance is paid directly to your registered bank account at the same time of your salary, which is usually 17th of each month. You'll probably pay the full advanced rent to the agencies first and receive the allowance from OIST.

Q: How long will the relocation Team support my "relocation"?

A: Basically, our supporting term for each case is about two months since we consider it is averagely spent until the ultimate settlement by finding a permanent residence and buying a car etc. In case something that requires outside help comes up after the supporting duration finished, the [Resource Center](#), can help you to solve your personal matters.

Phones and the Internet

Q: I want to buy a new phone in Japan. How can I do that?

A: You must have a registered residence status. You can buy popular products such as iPhone and Galaxy at any stores, but they are always sold with SIM cards and two-year contract is required. Some retail shops station English-speaking staffs so you can ask questions directly in English. Here is the link to the detail. [Resource Center](#).

Q: I have a phone and want to use it with Japanese SIM. Is it possible?

A: You need to check whether if your phone can work in Japan or not. Your phone must be designed to work with that bandwidth. Secondly, even if your phones work in Japan, they need to have *Giteki Mark* or Technical Conformity Mark. Basically, you are not allowed to use the phone without that mark in Japan unless you use a temporal SIM for tourists. On-line shops have more varieties of data plan but request a credit card to pay for the monthly fee. Here is the link to the detail. [Resource Center](#).

Q: How can I have the Internet at home?

A: Just like the phone contracts, registered address is necessary to apply. You can apply at any major phone shops. You may receive some discount on condition that a smart phone and the Internet are registered under the same person. You can also order the Internet online or by phone. Some companies have English speaking staffs/operators so that you can ask questions regarding the condition of the contract in English. Please be noted that you need to make 2 years contract in most of the cases and it takes 2 - 6 weeks to complete all the steps until you can start using the Internet. Please contact the Relocation team for more detailed information.

Driving in Japan

Q: I would like to drive in Japan. What do I have to have?

A: You must be a qualified driver with either of the following conditions.

Case 1: If your license is issued in Monaco, Slovenia, Belgium, France, Germany, Switzerland or Taiwan, you can drive with an official Japanese translation of your foreign license for one year. JAF (Japan Automobile Federation) offers the translation service. You can apply for it after you register your residence in Japan.

Case 2: The possession of International Driving Permit in a member country of Geneva Convention Parties allow you to drive in Japan. Please check the Metropolitan Police Department link (<http://www.keishicho.metro.tokyo.jp/foreign/traffic/geneva.htm>) to check the validity of your IDP.

Case 3: Exchanging your foreign driver's license for a Japanese driver's license is possible if your license is valid and you can prove that you stayed more than 90 days in the license issued country by official documents, you can obtain the Japanese driver's license after passing written and road tests. Some countries are exempted from the both tests. Please ask us for further information regarding the list of those countries.

Case 4: If none of above is applicable to you, you can go to Japanese driving school and take a course to get the Japanese driver's license. Some schools provide English textbooks. If you take 2 lessons every day, it takes about one and half months to complete all the requested processes. The total cost is approximately 300,000 yen. Here is the link to the detail. [Resource Center](#).

Q: Can I rent a car as soon as I arrive? And how can I arrange for that?

A: Yes, you can start renting as soon as you arrive, and we can arrange one for you even before your arrival. To apply, you are requested to submit a copy of your valid license and pay cash in Japanese yen when you receive a car. There are some rental car agencies which offer a long-term lease. Here is the link to the detail. [Resource Center](#).

Q: I would like to buy a car in Japan. Will the relocation team give me information or field support?

A: Yes, we will support you. Firstly, you need to have a registered address in Japan and a personal seal (Inkan). So, it is better to start thinking of getting a car after you find your permanent residence. To look for a car, using car searching sites is very efficient; Cross Road (<http://www.o-cross.net/>) and Goo-net Okinawa (<http://ok.goo-net.com/index.html>) are worth checking. Once you find cars that you would like to see, we can contact the car shops for further information or reservation for visiting. The car shops usually accept only one-time payment in cash (Japanese yen) and need about one week to complete the inspection and the registration. Here is the link to [English Speaking Service Car Shop](#)

Initial cost for setting in Okinawa

□ This chart shows the average cost of various activities/expenses that you probably need to pay for within a month. We hope it helps you to make your budget plan before you come to Okinawa.

Activities/ Expenses	Average cost				Your plan	
Start Renting House/ Apartment	Long term contract (usually more than a year), Monthly rent × 4 ⇒ Initial cost ※1				Monthly lease	yen
	Apartment (Studio) 60,000 yen × 4 ⇒ 240,000 yen (2LDK) 80,000 yen × 4 ⇒ 320,000 yen	House (3LDK) 100,000 yen × 4 ⇒ 400,000 yen	Furnished Apartment (Studio) 80,000 yen × 4 ⇒ 320,000 yen (2LDK) 120,000 yen × 4 ⇒ 480,000 yen	Campus Housing ※2	Furnished Apartment (Studio) 120,000 yen × 1 ⇒ 120,000 yen	yen
Monthly Utility Bill	Single (Regular month) Water 4,000 Gas 4,000 Electricity 7,000 Total: 15,000 yen	Single (Summer time) Water 5,000 Gas 5,000 Electricity 10,000 Total: 20,000 yen	Family (Regular month) Water 7,000 Gas 7,000 Electricity 15,000 Total: 29,000 yen	Family (Summer time) Water 8,000 Gas 8,000 Electricity 20,000 Total: 36,000 yen	yen	
Monthly Food Cost	Single (self-catering) 40,000 yen		Single (eat-out) 60,000 yen	Family (self-catering) 80,000 yen	yen	
Monthly Phone Fee	Buy a smart phone 10,000 yen ~		Buy a regular phone 3,000 yen ~	Buy a SIM card 2,000~5,000 yen ※Payment by credit card only	yen	
Home Internet	Installation fee is about 5,000 yen Monthly fee of the unlimited volume of data transfer with fast speed internet is 6,000~				yen	
Purchase or Rent a Car	Buy a used car 300,000 yen~ Voluntary insurance for one year 70,000 yen~ (Highly Recommended)		Rental Car (monthly lease) 60,000 yen~		yen	
※1 Initial cost includes one month advance rent, deposit, reikin (key money), commission fee and fire insurance. The total amounts to be 4times as much as the monthly rent. ※2 Initial cost includes an advance rent, deposit and fire insurance. The deposit is same as one month rent. Fire insurance is about 15,000 yen. For the monthly rent of each type of the room, please refer to the " Campus Housing Rent Information ".					TOTAL yen	