

Working at OIST

Frequently Asked Questions for Faculty

Teaching and Service

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What will my teaching obligations be?

OIST's staff-to-student ratio is very favourable and will remain so (about 50 faculty to 150 students). There is no undergraduate program. The emphasis is on learning research by doing research, with courses required in the first two years. Students start work in their thesis laboratory at the end of the first year, and sit an oral examination based on their thesis proposal at the end of the second year.

All full-time faculty members are expected to teach one approved graduate course per year (two credits per year) as a minimum. The required faculty-class contact time for a two-credit graduate course is 30 hours. If faculty members share teaching of a course, their teaching credit is pro-rated.

All full-time faculty members are expected to host graduate students on rotations in their laboratories. All OIST graduate students are required to complete three rotations. At least one of the rotations must be outside the specific field of the student's studies at OIST. Therefore, rotation students will at times come from academic fields different from that of the faculty member. The aim of a rotation is for the student to understand the questions addressed in the research unit, to learn about methods and scientific language used in the field, and to use the methods used in the research unit. Faculty members are expected to include rotation students in their unit activities and provide them with an opportunity for research experience.

How are courses approved?

Faculty members are expected to deliver research-informed teaching in their areas of expertise. OIST encourages an interactive, tutorial style of teaching. Course proposals must be formally evaluated by the Graduate School and be approved by the Ministry of Education. OIST expects faculty to develop courses of high international quality.

How are graduate students recruited?

Graduate students are admitted to the PhD program after a selection process that includes the faculty evaluations, with the final decision made by an Admissions Committee. OIST advertises the Graduate Programme through standard media, and through direct representation at the prestigious Japanese and non-Japanese universities, institutes, and conferences. Applications are made electronically on the OIST web site.

Am I permitted to select my own graduate students?

The selection of graduate students follows a rigorous process that examines academic records and intellectual development potential. Faculty members are encouraged to attract promising applicants to apply, even though the final selection is made by the OIST Admissions Committee. Graduate students are accepted into the program, and are not assigned to individual labs until after they have completed their rotations.

What support is given to graduate students?

OIST graduate students receive financial support and housing that are competitive with those of the most prestigious international institutions. This includes relocation and settlement support, and financial support of 2.4 million yen per year, payment of tuition fees, and support for travel and conference attendance once per year.