

Frequently Asked Questions for Arranging Non-local International Research Learning Experience (NIRLE)

a) *Financial Support*

1. What is the funding support for non-local international research learning experience provided for PhD students under the 4-year PhD Programme?

The University provides a maximum of HK\$20,000 research student expenses (RSE) for eligible PhD students (except UIC and self-funded students) for non-local international attachment, non-local international conference and other research-related activities.

For HKPFS awardees, the RSE is HK\$14,000 per year (subject to annual review) for a maximum of 3 years plus the University's provision of HK\$20,000 for the student's 4-year study period.

2. Can students receive honorariums for their active contributions to the collaborative project participated during the period of non-local international research learning experience?

Students are not encouraged to receive honorariums, especially for those HKBU studentship recipients. Students should also observe the taxation requirement and relevant laws of the visiting countries concerned.

3. How can I apply for the funding support?

Students please follow the two steps below for claiming RSE:

- 1st step: Budget Approval: Submit [Application for Budget Approval](#) to the Graduate School at least 3 weeks before the event takes places; and
- 2nd step: Budget Reimbursement: Submit [Application for Reimbursement](#) to the graduate School in 1 week after you have returned to Hong Kong.

b) *Format and nature of non-local international research learning experience*

4. What is Non-local International Research Learning Experience?

To better address the diverse needs of Research Postgraduate (RPg) students, the University has changed the Overseas Research Learning Experience to Non-local International Research Learning Experience (NIRLE) requirement with effect from 5 November 2024. Students may choose either¹ of the following options to fulfil the relevant graduation requirements to maximize the flexibility of NIRLE arrangements:

(a) one-month physical non-local international attachment²; or

(b) two physical attendances at reputable non-local international conferences, workshops, events or exhibitions, featuring either a poster or an oral presentation.

¹Students may choose to participate in multiple attachments to cumulatively meet the required period. A cumulative combination of mixed options to meet the NIRLE graduation requirement is not permitted.

²To cater to the diverse career aspirations, the one-month non-local international attachment could be

replaced by one-month research internship with the industry, business, NGO, etc. In this regard, the requirement could either be NIRLE or Internship.

Please note that virtual participation will not be counted, except for students who have already been approved for study leave for a virtual event prior to the effective date.

5. Is it allowable to attend online programmes held by non-local institutions for fulfilment of non-local international research learning experience?

Virtual participation will not be counted, except for students who have already been approved for study leave for a virtual event prior to the effective date (i.e. 5 November 2024)

6. After I returned to HK from a non-local international attachment, I continued to participate in the discussion of the collaborative project with the non-local institution virtually. Can the virtual meeting period be counted as part of the non-local international attachment?

No, except for students who have already been approved for study leave for a virtual event prior to the effective date. (i.e. 5 November 2024)

7. What should I do if I already have fulfilled 30 days overseas attachment and one oral presentation before?

For the Presentation requirement, if you have submitted proof of the presentation, the fulfilment of the presentation requirement will be reflected in your graduation audit check on BUniPort.

Under the ORLE requirement, if you have submitted proof of the overseas attachment, the fulfilment of the ORLE requirement will be reflected in your graduation audit check on BUniPort.

8. What should I do if I already have fulfilled 15 days overseas attachment before but did not attend a conference?

Under the NIRLE requirement, you will need to arrange another 15 days physical overseas attachment to complete the one-month physical non-local international attachment requirement.

For the presentation requirement, you should arrange at least one physical poster or oral presentation at reputable non-local international conferences, events, or exhibitions to fulfil the requirement.

9. What should I do if I already have fulfilled 15 days virtual attachment before?

Under the NIRLE requirement, you may fulfil the NIRLE requirements by arranging:

(1) another 15 days of physical non-local international attachment, *OR*

(2) two instances of physical attendance at reputable non-local international conferences, events, or exhibitions, featuring either a poster or oral presentation, *OR*

(3) a one-month internship.

The study leave application could be submitted after 18 Nov 2024 when the system reopens or at least three weeks before your trip.

10. What should I do if I already have completed one poster presentation at an international conference online?

For the presentation requirement, if you have submitted proof of the presentation, the fulfilment of the presentation requirement will be reflected in your graduation audit check on *BUniPort*.

Under the NIRLE requirement, you should arrange another physical attendance at reputable non-local international conferences, workshops, events, or exhibitions, featuring either a poster or oral presentation and submit the study leave application in order to fulfil the NIRLE requirement.

Alternatively, you may fulfil the NIRLE requirements by arranging one-month internship or non-local international attachment physically.

11. For the one-month physical non-local international research learning experience, can I do it accumulatively?

Yes. For example, you can arrange two 15-days overseas attachments.

12. If I have already completed one oral presentation at an international conference, can I arrange another 15-days physical non-local international research learning experience to fulfill the NIRLE requirement?

No. Under the NIRLE requirement, you must either have:

- (a) two presentations at non-local international conferences, or
- (b) one-month non-local international attachment, or
- (c) one-month internship.

Please note that mixed mode will not be accepted.

13. What are the recognised activities for non-local international attachment?

Students could participate in the following recognised activities for fulfilling the 1-6 months NIRLE requirements:

- Engagement in a research project conducted in a non-local country
- Fieldwork and data collection with non-local international collaborator(s)
- Research internship with the industry, business, NGO etc
- Visiting fellowship at a non-local international university
- Other types of non-local research training

14. Do you have a list of potential non-local international attachment organizations?

The Graduate School (GS) does not have a list. Students are advised to discuss the arrangement of non-local international attachment with your Supervisors.

c) *Visa/Status*

15. When arranging attachment with non-local institutions, what are the status can we ask for with the institutions?

Students are expected to be an exchange student/ visiting researcher during the non-local international attachment. GS will help prepare a letter of proof to facilitate your visa application; and please provide an invitation/ acceptance note issued by the hosting institution as a supporting document.

16. May I choose a home country's institution for non-local international research learning experience?

In general, students should refrain from taking non-local international attachment at their home countries. In special circumstances, students can seek discretionary approval from the Executive Associate Dean of Graduate School. Strong justification and endorsement from Principal Supervisors are required.

17. What are the internal procedures for applying non-local international attachment?

Student should submit "*Application for Study Leave (Non-local International Research Learning Experience)*" via BUniPort together with supporting documents:

- (1) invitation/ proof of acceptance from the partner institution
- (2) your research plan with details on purpose of the study and the research work to be undertaken.

18. Can I plan to go to non-local international attachment before the confirmation of my candidature or 6 months before the end of my normal study period?

The non-local international attachment shall normally take place after the confirmation of candidature and not fall within the last 6 months* of the students' normal study period to avoid time clash with class attendance (before confirmation of candidature) or thesis writing/ experimental work at final stage of your studies. Depending on discipline's need, you may further discuss the arrangement with your Supervisor.

**Effective from 5 November 2024, virtual participation will not be counted, except for students who have already been approved for study leave for a virtual event prior to this date.*

d) *Others*

19. What actions should we take after completing the non-local international attachment? What type of official documents and reports do we need to prepare?

For conference/ research schools/ internship, students should obtain a certificate/proof of accomplishment/ attendance from the organisers as far as possible and upload the document(s) in BUniport (Upload Proof Upon Completion of Study Leave). You are also advised to observe the Faculty/School specific reporting requirements, if any.