

**HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY**

**GRADUATE SCHOOL**

**Research Postgraduate Programmes**

#### Guidelines & Procedures for Non-local International Research Learning Experience (NIRLE)

The following guidelines and procedures are for informational purposes only. Please refer to the latest handbook for research postgraduate students for detailed information.

**Guidelines**

1. The University aims for its research postgraduate students to gain enriched learning opportunities through attachment experiences at a non-local comparable institution or research organisation. The goal is to acquire new skills, technology or knowledge not available locally.
2. In the 4-year PhD programme, students are required to undertake non-local international research learning experience for 1-6 months by either (a) a one-month physical non-local international attachment1; or (b) two physical attendance at reputable non-local international conferences, workshops, events or exhibitions, featuring either a poster or an oral presentation. Virtual participation will not be counted2. *(Note: To cater to 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. The guidelines and procedures below apply to both NIRLE and internship.)*
3. The attachment shall normally take place after the confirmation of candidature and not fall within the last 6 months of the students’ normal study period.
4. Students with approved NIRLE application shall be required to pay the normal tuition fees to HKBU. If the student is receiving a studentship, he/she shall be eligible to continue to receive the studentship during the period of attachment.
5. The leave of absence for the approved attachment(s) will be counted towards the period of study.
6. Students may apply for “Research Student Expenses” to support the travel and taxes incurred for the NIRLE application, subject to the relevant regulations and procedures. Any expenses outside the designated amount and categories, such as subsistence and insurance, will be the responsibility of the student or may be covered by undesignated funds within the Department or Faculty/School, if approved. No additional funding will be provided from designated accounts (e.g. Staff Development, and Equipment).
7. The NIRLE should **NOT** be taken place within the last 6 months of the normal study period; and the total/aggregate attachment period should **NOT** exceed 6 months or 183 calendar days (for 4-year PhD students) / 3 months or 92 calendar days (for MPhil students).

*1 Students 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.*

*2 Except for students who have already been approved for study leave for a virtual event prior to the effective date.*

1. **For Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme (HKPFS) awardees only**: With reference to the Terms and Conditions of HKPFS, “an awardee is required to comply with the residence requirement of the affiliated institution. Subject to this, he/she may spend an aggregate period of up to 183 days outside Hong Kong for academic/research activity in the three-year fellowship period. If an awardee stays outside Hong Kong for academic/research activity for an aggregate period exceeding 90 consecutive days, or an aggregate of 183 days, the stipend will be suspended immediately unless prior approval by the RGC has been given upon provision of strong justification by the affiliated institution.” Please submit the request to the Graduate School (GS) via BUniport at least one month (30 days) before the event and GS will send the request to UGC on your behalf. You should not commence the attachment without UGC’s approval.
2. Students should ensure that they hold a valid student visa upon returning from the NIRLE.
3. Students intending to participate in the NIRLE engagement must first ensure they have met all the prerequisite conditions established by the NIRLE Organiser/Country before departure. This may include obtaining a medical examination and any vaccinations, etc, endorsed by the NIRLE Organiser/Country, if required. If additional time is needed to satisfy these conditions, it should be taken from the students' annual leave, not their study leave. Any expenses incurred during this extended period to complete the prerequisite requirements will not be reimbursed.
4. For travel insurance, students shall submit the “Overseas Travel Insurance Declaration Form for Official Trip” to Finance Office before the departure date. Please visit <https://fohome.hkbu.edu.hk/for-students/download-centre/download-centre.html> to access the declaration form and follow the guidelines from the Finance Office.

**Procedures**

1. Interested students should first discuss the proposed NIRLE arrangement with their supervisor(s).
2. Students are required to submit an Application for Study Leave (Non-local International Research Learning Experience) via BUniPort at least 30 days before the start date of the proposed NIRLE. Required supporting documents include: (1) an invitation or proof of acceptance from the partner institution and (2) a research plan detailing the purpose of the study and the research work to be undertaken. Applications must be endorsed by the Principal Supervisor, Department Head, Faculty Dean and the Graduate School.
3. If the total NIRLE period exceeds 6 months or 183 calendar days for the 4-year PhD programme and 3 months or 92 calendar days MPhil programme (counted cumulatively and including public holidays), students are required to provide strong justifications in a separate memo to be uploaded under Supporting Document for consideration at least one month before the start date of the proposed NIRLE.
4. To facilitate travel arrangements to and from the destination, students may apply for up to two additional days of study leave – one day before and one day after the scheduled event. If students need to extend their leave period beyond this limit, the extra time off should be deducted from their annual leave entitlement. If students wish to participate in more than one event under the same study leave application, a maximum of two days of study leave to stay outside Hong Kong between two different events may be considered. If the intervals of stay outside Hong Kong between the two events exceed two days, annual leaves must be taken for the extra time.
5. All requisite information and documents must be submitted properly before an application can be considered. Please allow ample time for processing of your application.

**Privacy Policy Statement and Personal Information Collection Statement (PPS/PICS)**

According to the Privacy Policy Statement / Personal Information Collection Statement (PPS/PICS) of the Hong Kong Baptist University (the "University"), personal data of students of the University are collected and retained for a variety of reasons and used for many purposes as such have been set out in the PPS/PICS. Please visit <https://www.hkbu.edu.hk/eng/about/privacy.jsp> for access to the PPS/PICS.

Under the provision of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance, request for personal data access or correction may be made and addressed to:

Graduate School

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