

BIRLA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCE PILANI
Academic Graduate Studies and Research Division

1st June 2024

Guidelines for BITS Pilani International Travel Award for PhD Students

BITS Pilani has announced a new initiative, International Travel Award to provide travel support to PhD students to attend international conferences. This initiative is expected to provide international exposure to PhD students and expand their understanding of advances within their discipline. Travel to international conferences would allow meeting other researchers from across the world which could also help PhD students in their future pursuits.

Scope of the guidelines

The following guidelines are applicable to PhD students intending to travel to a conference organized outside India to present a paper or poster. The guidelines are not applicable to PhD students intending to attend a workshop, training session, symposium or others.

Eligibility

1. Full-time PhD students of the Pilani Campus, KK Birla Goa Campus, and Hyderabad Campus of BITS Pilani are eligible to submit an application for the BITS Pilani International Travel Award.
2. PhD students after completing two years from the date of admission are eligible for consideration for the International Travel Award.
3. PhD students enrolled in dual degree programs (Cotutelle programs) are not eligible for the travel award.
4. A PhD student can receive the International Travel Award only once during their PhD program.

Conference selection

1. The conference should be a well-known and top conference that provides a significant opportunity for research scholars to interact and network with top academicians and industry professionals.
2. The conference should be organized by a renowned Scientific Society / Association related to the research scholar's broad area of research.
3. The work to be presented at the conference should be from the objective(s) of the research scholar's thesis work. The presentation should be in oral or poster presentation format.
4. Acceptance of papers/ abstracts for presentation at the conference should be based on a robust peer-review process.

Selection process for a travel award

1. A campus-level "Selection Committee for the BITS Pilani International Travel Award" will be constituted by the Director.
2. The research scholar will submit an application form for the travel award at least three months before the conference start date or immediately after the acceptance of the abstract or paper, whichever is earlier.
3. The application should be submitted to the DRC of the research scholar through the supervisor. DRC will review the application and submit a recommendation to the Selection Committee. The Selection Committee will meet periodically to review and select research scholars for the travel award. The Selection Committee recommendations will be considered and approved by the Director.

The Selection Committee constituted in each campus by the Director will comprise of:

- Director's nominee as Chairperson and Convener (at Senior Professor / Professor level)
- Associate Dean or Nucleus Member of AGSRD

- Three members (at Assistant Professor level and above from Engineering, Sciences, Pharmacy and Humanities and Social Sciences disciplines)

The appointment of the Chairperson and members will be for a duration of 2 years.

The Selection Committee will consider the following criteria, but not limited to, during the assessment of applications.

- Acceptance of a paper or abstract for presentation at the conference after the peer-review process. PhD student should be the first author of the paper or abstract.
- The reputation of the conference, where the conference is organized by a respectable Scientific Society/ Association. Wherever possible, an indicator of the conference quality based on ranking systems like SJR, CORE, ABDC, or other metrics may be provided.
- Supervisor(s) and Doctoral Advisory Committee (DAC) members' and DRC recommendation on the progress of thesis project work in relation to the objectives approved in the thesis proposal.

The Selection Committee would consider the distribution of the awards in a year among different departments proportionate to the number of eligible PhD students.

Priority in the selection is given to i) PhD students near to thesis submission and ii) PhD students not receiving any other travel support.

The application form and supporting documents must be forwarded to the AGSRD Office. The Selection Committee will meet at least four times in a year, in the first week of January, April, July, and October, to consider the applications.

Travel Grant

The International Travel Award can be utilized to pay for the following purposes.

- Economy class airfare to and from the nearest airport.
- Conference registration charges.
- Local conveyance, including travel to the airport and place of stay.
- Visa processing fees.
- Lodging and boarding expenses for the days of the conference with a maximum limit of INR 8500/- per day.
- International travel insurance at silver class.

The grant will be based on the actual expenditure incurred. The maximum limit of the grant for International Travel Award is INR 1.5 lakh.

If a PhD student receives travel award/support from another source, he/she can use the BITS Pilani International Travel Grant for expenses not supported by the other source.

Report submission on return by scholar

The scholar on return will present a 15-30-minute seminar in the department based on the work presented and travel experience. He/she should mention the other additional benefits achieved such as collaboration possibilities and any presentations given at other local universities, etc.

The scholar should submit the comprehensive report or presentation slides to the AGSRD Office within a month of attending the conference.

This guideline is applicable starting 1st June 2024.

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