

Tohoku University-Tsinghua University Collaborative Research Fund 2025 Guidelines

BACKGROUND

In order to strengthen research collaboration and deepen relationships, Tohoku University (“**Tohoku**”) and Tsinghua University (“**Tsinghua**”) renewed the Collaboration Agreement on December 15, 2021, and both agreed to provide up to RMB500,000 per year and up to RMB500,000 per year, respectively, to a joint collaborative research fund (“**Fund**”) over four years commencing December 31st, 2021.

The fund will be used to promote and encourage collaborative research and development between the two universities, to provide facilities for this purpose and to enhance the activities, profiles and reputation of each party. Applications from all fields are welcome. It is expected that the outcomes of funded collaborations will be the submission of co-authored publications, the holding of joint workshops or seminars, reciprocal visits by faculty, staff and students*, and joint applications for external grant funding. (* Refer to the notes on page 3.)

Policy: In line with Tohoku and Tsinghua’s commitments to equality and diversity, we encourage applications from a range of backgrounds regardless of career stage, age, disability, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and religion.

GRANT SIZE AND DURATION

Each institution will provide funds to its own researchers. Funds may only be spent at the home institution/country.

Seed Grants

Up to six successful proposals will receive up to RMB200,000 each for a duration of up to 24 months at Tsinghua and up to approximately JPY3.5 million (RMB200,000) each for a duration of up to 24 months at Tohoku. The purpose of the seed grant is to establish a joint research collaboration leading to the submission of at least two joint co-authored publications, at least two reciprocal visits for staff and/or students*, and the targeting of a suitable scheme for the submission of a joint application for external research funding. (* Refer to the notes on page 3.)

APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS

1. Requirements for Applications

- (1) Each research proposal must be jointly prepared by lead investigators from both institutions and each lead investigator must submit an application on the provided application form to his/her own institution by the deadline.
- (2) Lead investigators from both institutions must have engaged in substantive research exchanges or collaborations prior to applying for this Fund, and at least one of the following conditions must be met:
 - a) the lead investigators must have at least one joint publication in international academic journals in the past three years (lead investigators or core group members of both institutions must be the first, the second or the corresponding author(s));
 - b) the lead investigators must have received external funding toward their joint research projects;
 - c) the work of the joint research proposal is part of an international big science project;
 - d) the research to be conducted is expected to develop into a full-fledged collaborative research project in the future.

2. Selection of Applications

- (1) Applications will be first assessed by each institution in accordance with its internal policies. Both institutions will then submit their recommendations to the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will decide which projects are to be funded and how much funding shall be allocated to each project.
- (2) Selection criteria will be:
 - a) Quality, expected outcomes and impact of the proposed research program
 - b) Strength of research team relative to opportunity
 - c) Alignment of proposal with purpose and expected outcomes of the Fund

ELIGIBLE ITEMS FOR FUNDING

Seed Grants

- Travel costs of researchers and/or research students associated with the project*
- Reimbursement of living costs of visiting researchers from each institution*
- Minor research costs associated with the project. Not to exceed 25% of grant.
- Salaries and scholarships will not be funded

(* Refer to the notes on page 3.)

SUBMISSION

The lead investigators from Tohoku and Tsinghua need to work together to prepare a joint application. The application needs to be submitted to the lead investigator's institution to be eligible for consideration.

Applications will only be accepted via email in either PDF or Word format:

Tohoku applicants: Global Engagement Coordination Team, kokusai-c@grp.tohoku.ac.jp

Tsinghua applicants: Overseas R&D Management Office, zhang-han@tsinghua.edu.cn

Call for proposals: December 16, 2024

Deadline: 5pm (local time) on February 18, 2025

Announcement of successful grants: March 18, 2025

Start of successful grants: April 1, 2025

ANNUAL REVIEW

Each lead investigator shall comply with the internal annual review requirements at his/her home institution, and each project shall participate and present the progresses of each project at the annual review meeting jointly held by both institutions.

FINAL REVIEW

Upon completion, each funded project must have achieved the following goals:

1. At least two joint publications in international academic journals (such as SCI or EI journal) with lead investigators and/or core group members from each institution being the first, the second or the corresponding author(s); or at least one joint international patent (Tsinghua and Tohoku shall be joint patent owners); and
2. In addition to the above, one of the following results must be achieved:
 - a) Researchers, graduate students, or postdoctoral fellows from Tohoku must have worked in Tsinghua for a period of almost 3 months, or a period of 3 months or more continuously, and researchers, graduate students, or postdoctoral fellows from Tsinghua must have worked in Tohoku for a period of almost 3 months, or a period of 3 months or more continuously*;
 - b) Researchers from Tohoku must have taught at least one course at Tsinghua for at least half

a semester continuously, and

researchers from Tsinghua must have taught at least one course at Tohoku for at least half a semester continuously*;

- c) The research project must have received new external funding during the term of this Fund;
- d) The lead investigators from both institutions must have been engaged in an international big science project jointly based on the collaboration supported by this Fund.

* **Notes:**

Due to high rate of inflation and considered environmental impacts by international travels, we strongly encourage applicants to explore methods of remote collaboration. Activities can include:

- Developing joint research projects.
- Organizing a joint seminar/workshop (remotely or in person), including costs for any external services required to facilitate seminar/workshop. E.g. Professional moderation or technical support.
- Visiting a collaborator to work on a research paper/project or other research activity that cannot be carried out remotely.
- Stipends for research assistants, interns and students.
- Doctoral student mobility.
- Services used to disseminate results.

This list isn't exhaustive and we understand that there may be other ways you wish to conduct the project.