

Ad-hoc subcommittee Report

On

Travel Grant for International Conferences

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Travel Grant @ IIT KANPUR

Travel Grant is provided to all students whose manuscripts have been accepted in Conferences/ Seminars of repute organized abroad. Travel grant is provided in principle to offset the financial burden borne by the authors/presenters who represent IIT Kanpur's research excellence. As a policy, all UG & PG students can avail it once during their course of study for International conferences whereas PhD students have the opportunity to attend twice in their average 5 year programme.

Rules & Procedures:

The funding for any student per conference is borne by DRPG with certain norms in the bottleneck

1. Any student should get a minimum of Rs.20, 000/- from his/her supervisor and HOD of the concerned department.
2. If in case the student is applying for any of the funding agencies like CSIR, DST, INSA etc., and avails the grant sanctioned by those agencies, in such cases the student is expected to exhaust all such funds before applying to DRPG.
3. In any case DRPG affords to give a maximum of Rs.50, 000/- per student per conference.

Problems Reported from Student Community

In total any student of IITK gets a maximum of Rs.70000/- from the Institute to support their expenditure. This lump-sum amount is in effect from the last decade way back in 2001 or so, and subsequently, little or no periodic review has been conducted on its applicability in current times. Since air fares and Conference registration amounts has increased significantly in the recent past, the registered students of IIT Kanpur are financially burdened to bear the excess cost of presenting their academic output to the international community.

To offset the claims, the students approach alien institutes like CSIR, DST for additional funding. The scrutiny is hard and hardly 10 % of students applied get the required funding. Furthermore, such external agencies do not understand the significance of state-of-the-art work done by research scholars and students of our institute, which effect negatively on the scrutiny. Since most do not get the required funding, their opportunity to represent the institute and present academia is squandered.

Proposed Solution

Proposal 1:

Assumption: DRPG can fund the student community as per the requirement.

In order not to lose our academic repute, global ideas and cross cutting relationship at the global concern, by the students of IITK will enrich the students, as well as bring laurels and adding more feathers to the ornamental crown of IITK. We kindly propose to increase the travel grant supported by DRPG to be revised to Rupees One lakh per student per conference to meet the airfare, registration fees and other expenditure incurred. This will considerably motivate the research scholars and students helping them to diversify knowledge across the globe.

In brief, considering the same policy guidelines of DRPG as stated above, the proposed scheme can help the students of IITK to a funding of **rupees 1.2 lakhs in total** even if their application are being rejected by the funding organizations they are applying for.

Proposal 2:

Assumption: DRPG cannot afford to fund the student community as per our requirement.

Fact: As per the statistical information from DRPG, the ratio of students attending international conferences are in general UG+PG with respect to PhD students is approximately 5:100 for past several years.

Every PhD student can avail a total of rupees one lakh for two conferences as per the present norms. Adopting same rules and procedures being followed in the present mode, if this revenue source has been made like a pool one, for per student and raising the cap of minimum funding per conference to Rs.1 lakh but keeping the total funding for two conferences also to be well-bounded to one lakh can certainly have the following advantages:

1. If suppose a student is getting funded from CSIR, DST etc. for his first conference and he/she is ending up to claim only Rs.20000/- from DRPG to meet his remaining expenditure, in such cases if this policy is being implemented the student can take eighty thousand rupees from DRPG for his second international conferences where he may be left with no funding from external agencies. The above can also happen in a vice-versa with respect to the first and second conference.
2. In other circumstances if the student is going for an international conference to be held in USA or European countries where his/her expenses are quite high and he/she is being rejected by the funding agencies, in this case too the policy can very well help the student community to avail a maximum of Rs.1 lakh to meet his expenses. It may happen that the same student may go to present his second conference in near Asian countries where his/her total expenditure may be very meager which he should seek from HOD/Supervisor/funding agencies.

If DRPG feels so that in such cases the fund allotted from the HOD/Supervisor also has to be increased for per conference, let it change the policy and give appropriate instructions to the departments considering some exceptions (like HSS). In other case, DRPG can also make some policies where the funding from HOD/Supervisor can be merged with DRPG itself has a whole just similar to the merging of DOAA with DRPG, which can solve several routing channels and further streamline the system across the board of all registered students of IITK despite the present day norms where some departmental funding are more than the minimum and some being less on the other hand.

The most beautiful part of the second proposal is that without any need to raise and generate fund, just modifying the policy and adopting flexi plans will help the students similar to the first proposal. The second proposal also allows the PhD students to avail a total of Rs. 1.2 Lakhs where in such cases he/she is not being funded by external sources.