

DFL ODA Analytics Research Residency 2025

Participant Handbook

Theme: Advanced Academic Research on Official Development Assistance (ODA) Analytics

Challenge: Korea University Development Futures Lab is seeking **four research resident teams** to conduct innovative academic research on ODA determinants, effects, and policy relationships

Target participants: Students of any level from any department at Korea University with an interest in applying emerging technologies and underused development data sets to understanding the relationship between aid flows and development

Eligibility: This program is open to all Korea University students. All participants must be enrolled at Korea University for the duration of the research residency.

Team size: 1-3 members

Awards:

Positions	Stipend Amount	Remarks
4 research residents	KRW 6,000,000 per team (total across project period)	DFL ODA Analytics Research Residency Stipend

Key Dates:

Event	Time Period	Details
Information Session	June 25, 2025	Explanation of the research program and Q&A opportunity for prospective applicants
Application Period	July 28 - August 3, 2025	Submission of research proposals
Resident Selection	August 3 - September 3, 2025	Evaluation and selection of four research residents
Selection Announcement	September 3, 2025	Announcement of selected residents
Orientation for Selected Residents	W/C September 8, 2025	Selected residents will attend orientation session and begin base research activities
Research Implementation	September 8, 2025 - February 28, 2026	Residents conduct research while contributing to base research activities
Final Presentations	March 1-15, 2026	Residents present completed academic papers and research findings

Project organizer

The Korea University Development Futures Lab (DFL) conducts innovative research on development co-operation, with a particular focus on data analytics and framework development for the international aid community. Housed with Korea University's Graduate School of International Studies' Global Research Institute, the Lab approaches the development data ecosystem holistically, recognizing both the importance of analyzing existing data and improving the quality of data collection.

This research initiative builds directly upon the successful outcomes of the Lab's previous collaboration with UNDP. The Lab has demonstrated capacity to produce high-quality research outputs while effectively engaging with key stakeholders in the development data ecosystem.

Background - What We are Looking For

This research residency is a competitive academic program inviting Korea University students to develop **innovative research approaches** for understanding Official Development Assistance (ODA). DFL will select four research resident teams who will work alongside the base research team within a wider innovation ecosystem centered at the United Nations Development Program Seoul Policy Centre (USPC) throughout the 12-month project period.

DFL is looking for **academically rigorous research** with potential to advance understanding of ODA determinants, effects on donor countries, and relationships with other policy domains. By developing novel analytical frameworks and methodologies, residents will contribute to foundational knowledge that could later be utilized across the development cooperation ecosystem.

This program represents an opportunity to apply cutting-edge research techniques to transform existing knowledge into new academic insights that can inform policy and practice in development cooperation.

Research Focus Areas

The residency offers participants freedom to define specific research questions within the broader ODA analytics framework, exploring development cooperation from multiple analytical perspectives.

Residents can approach diverse research questions, ranging from macro-level policy analysis to sector-specific investigations. The key is to uncover meaningful insights that advance academic understanding of ODA dynamics, preferably employing emerging technologies and multiple data sets.

Core Research Themes:

ODA Determinants Research

- What economic, political, and strategic factors influence donor country decisions on ODA allocation?
- How have these determinants evolved over time?
- What role do domestic political considerations play in aid allocation?

Donor Economic Impact Research

- How does ODA spending affect donor country economies?
- What are the relationships between ODA and trade, investment flows, and domestic industry benefits?
- How do economic returns from ODA vary across different aid modalities?

Cross-Policy Coherence Research

- How do changes in donor countries' trade policies, migration policies, or climate commitments correlate with ODA patterns?
- What does policy coherence analysis reveal about integrated government approaches?
- How do different policy domains interact in shaping development cooperation?

Methodological Innovation Research

- What novel analytical approaches can enhance understanding of ODA dynamics?
- How can machine learning and advanced statistical methods be applied to ODA research?
- What innovative frameworks can integrate multiple data sources for ODA analysis?

Example Research Tracks

ODA Determinants Analysis

- **Primary Focus:** Economic, political, and strategic factors influencing donor decisions
- **Methodological Approaches:**
 - Quantitative analysis of historical aid allocation patterns
 - Political economy modeling of donor decision-making
 - Comparative analysis across donor countries and time periods
- **Key Data Sources:**
 - OECD CRS Database (detailed project-level ODA data)
 - World Bank Development Indicators
 - IMF Economic Data
 - Political stability indices
 - Electoral databases
- **Example Research Questions:**
 - How do electoral cycles influence aid allocation decisions?
 - What role do economic ties play in bilateral aid relationships?
 - How do crisis events reshape donor priorities?

Donor Economic Impact Assessment

- **Primary Focus:** Effects of ODA on donor country economies
- **Methodological Approaches:**
 - Economic impact modeling
 - Trade flow analysis
 - Industry-specific benefit assessment
 - Counterfactual analysis
- **Key Data Sources:**
 - OECD CRS Database
 - UN Comtrade Data (global trade statistics)
 - National economic accounts
 - Industry-specific data
 - Investment flow databases
- **Example Research Questions:**
 - What are the measurable economic returns to donor countries from ODA?
 - How does tied aid affect domestic industries differently than untied aid?
 - What spillover effects does ODA create in donor economies?

Cross-Policy Integration Research

- **Primary Focus:** Relationships between ODA and other policy domains
- **Methodological Approaches:**
 - Policy coherence analysis
 - Cross-domain correlation studies
 - Integrated policy modeling
 - Text analysis of policy documents
- **Key Data Sources:**
 - OECD CRS Database
 - Trade policy databases
 - Climate policy tracking
 - Migration policy indices
 - Diplomatic relations data
- **Example Research Questions:**
 - How do trade agreements influence subsequent aid flows?
 - What is the relationship between climate commitments and environmental aid?

- How do migration policies correlate with development cooperation approaches?

Portfolio Vulnerability and Risk Assessment

- **Primary Focus:** Predictive modeling of aid portfolio risks
- **Methodological Approaches:**
 - Machine learning for vulnerability prediction
 - Network analysis of aid relationships
 - Risk cascade modeling
 - Scenario planning techniques
- **Key Data Sources:**
 - Historical IATI data (2016-2024)
 - Macroeconomic indicators
 - Political risk indices
 - Crisis and conflict databases
 - Financial market data
- **Example Research Questions:**
 - What factors predict aid portfolio vulnerability to funding cuts?
 - How do crisis events cascade through aid networks?
 - What early warning indicators can predict aid disruptions?

Datasets and Resources

Residents will have access to a **primary dataset** prepared by USPC and are encouraged to integrate **complementary datasets** to enhance their research.

Other Primary Datasets Available:

- **OECD CRS Database:** Comprehensive project-level ODA data with donor/recipient countries, financial amounts, sectors, and aid modalities
- **IATI Registry:** Real-time aid activity data from multiple donors and organizations

Recommended Complementary Datasets:

- **Economic Data:** World Bank Development Indicators, IMF economic databases, UN Comtrade trade statistics
- **Political Data:** Electoral databases, governance indicators, political stability indices
- **Policy Data:** Trade agreement databases, climate policy tracking, diplomatic relations data, policy and project documents
- **Risk Assessment Data:** Conflict databases, economic crisis indicators, political risk assessments
- **Social Data:** Demographic and Health Surveys, education statistics, social indicators, social media logs
- **Geographical Data:** OpenStreetMap, ecological maps, nighttime lights
- **Environmental Data:** Land cover, air pollution, temperature, hydrological data

Mentorship and Support

Base Research Team Support: - Principal investigator and senior researchers to provide guidance on research design and methodology - Regular individual team mentoring sessions - Peer review and feedback sessions with other residents

Technical Support: - Statistical methodology consultation - Research design and academic writing support - Presentation skills development

Academic Development: - Guidance on academic publication processes - Conference presentation opportunities - Networking with development research community - Career development in academic and policy

research

For technical questions related to the program, please email dflab@korea.ac.kr.

Application Requirements

Required Submission Documents

(1) **Research Proposal** (maximum 3,000 words) including: - **Research Question and Objectives** - **Literature Review and Theoretical Framework** - **Methodology and Analytical Approach** - **Data Sources and Access Plans** - **Expected Contributions to Academic Knowledge**

(2) **CV/Resume** of all team members highlighting relevant research experience

(3) **Academic transcript** from KU for each team member

Application Process

1. Submit complete application package to dflab@korea.ac.kr
2. Applications must be received by August 3, 2025
3. Selection committee will review proposals based on evaluation criteria
4. Interviews may be conducted for shortlisted candidates
5. Final selection results announced September 3, 2025

Core Requirements

Academic Qualifications 1. **Educational Background:** - Currently enrolled student at Korea University
- Strong academic record in relevant field (economics, data science, computer science, political science, international development, statistics, or related) - Demonstrated research experience through coursework, thesis work, or independent projects

2. **Research Skills:**

- Proficiency in quantitative research methods and statistical analysis
- Experience with data analysis software (R, Python, Stata, or similar)
- Strong academic writing and analytical skills
- Ability to work independently while contributing to team research activities
- Experience with natural language processing, machine learning, etc. is desirable

Research Proposal Quality 1. **Theoretical Foundation:** - Clear theoretical framework grounding the research question - Comprehensive understanding of relevant literature - Innovative approach to existing research gaps

2. **Methodological Rigor:**

- Appropriate research design for the proposed question
- Feasible data collection and analysis plan
- Awareness of methodological limitations and challenges

Selection Criteria Priorities

Selection criteria	Details	Score distribution
Research Excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Theoretical rigor and innovation of proposed research- Methodological sophistication and appropriateness- Potential for significant academic contribution- Clarity and feasibility of research design	30

Selection criteria	Details	Score distribution
Technical Capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrated ability to conduct quantitative analysis - Experience with relevant datasets and analytical tools - Statistical and computational skills appropriate for proposed research - Data management and visualization capabilities 	30
Academic Potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Track record of academic achievement - Evidence of research potential through previous work - Writing quality and analytical thinking - Ability to contribute to collaborative research environment 	20
Alignment with Program Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relevance to ODA analytics research objectives - Potential for integration with base research activities - Commitment to academic publication and knowledge dissemination - Interest in development cooperation research field 	20

Program Structure

Research Component

- Each team develops and implements their own research project
- Regular progress meetings with faculty advisor
- Milestones and deliverables tracked throughout the program
- Final academic paper suitable for publication submission

Base Research Activities

- Collaborative literature review and knowledge synthesis
- Shared methodology development and peer consultation
- Joint workshops and research seminars
- Contribution to program-wide research outputs

Professional Development

- Academic writing workshops
- Research presentation training
- Peer review and feedback sessions
- Networking with development research community

Expected Outcomes

Team Deliverables

- **One complete academic paper** ready for submission to peer-reviewed journal
- **Research presentation** at final program symposium
- **Contribution to collaborative research outputs** produced by base research team
- **Research documentation** including methodology, data, and analysis code

Professional Development Outcomes

- Enhanced quantitative research skills specific to development cooperation analysis
- Experience with cutting-edge ODA analytics methodologies
- Publications and presentations suitable for academic or policy career paths
- Network connections within development research community
- Understanding of academic publication and peer review processes

Program-Wide Impact

- Advancement of academic knowledge on ODA determinants and effects
- Development of innovative analytical frameworks applicable to development cooperation
- Creation of foundational research that supports policy and practice improvements
- Strengthening of Korea University's research capacity in development analytics

Next Steps After Selection

Immediate Steps: - Orientation session covering program expectations and research support resources - Initial meetings with assigned faculty mentor - Access setup for datasets, software, and research infrastructure - Development of detailed research timeline and milestone schedule

Ongoing Collaboration: - Regular participation in base research team activities - Contribution to shared research outputs and knowledge products - Engagement with UNDP Seoul Policy Centre and other program partners - Participation in academic conferences and research dissemination activities

Long-term Opportunities: - Continued collaboration on follow-up research projects - Recommendations for academic or policy research positions - Integration into broader development research networks - Potential for extended research partnerships beyond program completion

This handbook provides comprehensive guidance for prospective research residents. For additional questions about the program, application process, or research expectations, please contact dflab@korea.ac.kr.