



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

GRO
FTP

- Fisheries Training Programme
- Under the auspices of UNESCO

Practical Information for Fellows 2022-2023

Your accommodation in Iceland



Address: Grensásvegur 14, 108 Reykjavík, Iceland

The GRÓ House is the Reykjavík home of the GRÓ six-month fellows (GRÓ-FTP, GRÓ-GTP & GRÓ-LRT) and houses occasionally GRÓ M.A./M.Sc. and PhD scholarship recipients and visiting guest lecturers invited by the four GRÓ Programmes. The house is located on Grensásvegur 14, close to a major shopping and recreational area with convenient access to bus routes. The GRÓ House is a three-storey building with 28 housing units located on the 2nd and 3rd floors, plus common rooms on each floor where fellows can gather, cook, eat, etc.

Weather in Reykjavík



What to expect

You should expect ALL kinds of weather. This is a hard one to answer because the weather in Iceland is so unpredictable. Take a look at the following site which gives you more information and you can watch some fun videos: <https://guidetoiceland.is/travel-info/climate-weather-and-northern-lights-in-iceland>

Basically, the average temperature in Reykjavík is around 1-2°C in winter and around 14°C in summer. The temperature in Reykjavík can drop down to -10°C in winter or go up to +8°C, and during summer, it can drop down to around 7°C and go up to 26°C.

Warm Clothes

To get through the October to April period, you should have warm outdoor clothing. Most of our fellows come from a much warmer climate and therefore do not have Icelandic gear in their everyday wardrobe. Clothes in Iceland should be planned in two-layers. When inside, all houses and buildings are well heated thanks to our geothermal heating, so something light is required. But outside, you will need a good warm coat which covers you well. Hat and gloves, and most importantly, sturdy footwear that has good grips for when the weather turns icy, and when the roads and pathways become slippery.

Because this type of winter gear is expensive to buy new here, we recommend fellows visit the second-hand clothes shops which are run by the Icelandic Red Cross. Three of the Red Cross shops are downtown: at Laugavegur 116, Laugavegur 12 and Skólavörðustígur 12. The fourth one is in Hafnarfjörður, at Strandgata 24.

About your FTP fellowship

GRÓ-FTP allowance

GRÓ-FTP provides and pays for housing which includes bathroom and kitchen facilities (some rooms will have shared bathroom) and provides fellows with a living allowance of 4,500 ISK/day until the end of 2022 and 4,950 ISK/day from 2023. In October and few weeks of November, your monthly allowance will be provided in the form of a pre-paid gift/visa card (see information below) because it can take some weeks to open bank accounts and arrange access to banking facilities. In October, in addition to the monthly allowance, **fellows receive a settling-in allowance to the value of 50.000 ISK**. The settling-in allowance is intended to cover any initial expenses that might be necessary, e.g., a warm coat and good winter shoes.

Please note that once you get a bank account and a debit card, you will be able to withdraw money from any cash point machine /ATM or withdraw directly from the cashier in the bank. You will also be able to open an online account and transfer money online. However, your initial visa payment card can only be used at service outlets that accept Visa payment cards without a PIN number (most outlets). Unfortunately, you cannot use your card at a cash machine, but you can withdraw the balance from any branch of Landsbankinn. (See the information below.)

Your pre-paid currency card (VISA) from Landsbankinn

Your pre-paid visa card will be issued by Landsbankinn. www.landsbankinn.is Please familiarise yourself with the rules regarding the gift card by visiting the bank website (has English website). As soon as fellows can open a bank account, GRÓ-FTP will transfer the monthly allowance into your accounts in the beginning of each month.

On the bank website, you can find the information which is copied below about your card. Please remember that once the card is lost, it is unlikely you will get it back, so please treat it like cash. **According to the bank, it is possible that you will not be able to even retrieve the money from the lost card, so it is important to not lose the card.**

1. Sign your card before use.
2. You can use the card at sales outlets which accept VISA card payments without a PIN number.
3. You can withdraw cash from the card from the cashiers of any Landsbankinn bank.
4. **You CANNOT use the card at ATM/cash point machines.**
5. You can check the balance of your card at <https://www.landsbankinn.is/einstaklingar/kort-og-greidslur/gjafakort>

Other Scholarship benefits

Your GRÓ-FTP scholarship includes:

- One return air ticket to and from Iceland (economy class). 1 check-in item on the journey to Iceland and 1 check-in item on the journey home.
- Living allowance of 4,500 ISK/day until 2022 and 4,950 ISK/day from 2023 paid to each GRÓ-FTP fellow.
- Housing arrangements are paid for GRÓ-FTP fellows.
- Specific emergency medical and accident insurance during the 6 month-stay in Iceland.
- Immigration fees.
- Free bus pass for travel in the capital area.
- Each Fellow is provided with a laptop computer upon arrival in Iceland and which is theirs to keep on the successful completion of the programme.
- Each Fellow is provided with a settling-in allowance.

Getting refunded for receipts

All the payments that you had to pay to get to Iceland (eg. Transport to VFS, transit visas, visa application fees) will be reimbursed in December 2022. Within the arrival week, you will receive a reimbursement form, which you will be filling out all the payments you had, accompanied by the receipts and short description of what each of them is. Make sure to bring all the receipts so that they are refunded correctly. To get a refund, there must be a receipt, and usually, it is clear what is refunded and what is not. If there is a question on refunding or not, FTP staffs will just have to decide on that.

Important phone numbers and opening hours

Emergency police, fire department and ambulance service (Tel: 112)

Emergency Department, City Hospital, 24 hrs service, Tel. 525 1700.

Doctors on duty at the City Hospital, 24 hr service, Tel. 525 1000.

The main police station is at Hverfisgötu 113-115, Tel: 444 1000.

What to do if you are ill and need to see a doctor

There are health care clinics in all neighbourhoods in the capital area. Here, general health care services are provided, and people **generally go there first** for illnesses or other health related problems. Please consider whether your illness requires medical consultation/treatment first. If you have a cold or flu, the best thing to do is go to bed, rest, and drink lots of fluids.

Health center nearest to GRÓ House:

- Address: Heilsugæslan Álfheimar 74, openings hours 08:00-16:00
- Tel. 513 5700, each visit costs 10.500 ISK.

Healthcare after opening hours:

- Læknavaktin, Austurvegur – Háaleitisbraut, openings hours 17:00-22:00
- Tel. 544 4113 – each visit costs 16,000 ISK.

Insurance

The current insurance we have for everyone at Sjóvá is only for health and accident issues. GRÓ-FTP is responsible for the first 15,000 ISK only, and any costs extra will be borne by the fellows. After reaching 50,000 ISK, the insurance will take over for an amount up to 2,000,000 ISK.

This, however, does not include taxi fees (unless it is emergency and must take a taxi), prescription glasses, non-urgent medical procedures, and as such. Therefore, it is important that you bring all the receipts, and we will go over them together.

More information will be given to you later after you have arrived to Iceland.

Medicine

Pharmacies have similar opening hours as general stores. Please note that not all pharmacies are open on the weekends. Pharmacies in Iceland offers general off-the-counter medicine. Unless you have very specific medicine, you will need to get a prescription from a doctor. In the area you are going to live, there are 2 pharmacies: Apótek and Lyfja Skeifunni.

Monday – Friday: 9:00-18:00

Dentists

There are several dental surgeries in Reykjavík. If you need their services, they also have an emergency number at weekends. **Tel: 568 1041 or 575 0505**

Note: If you need to go to a dentist while you are staying here in Iceland, it is not in the responsibility of the GRÓ-FTP to pay that cost but we can find someone for you and arrange a time for you.

Banks & currency

Banking hours are normally 9:00-16:00 weekdays. In Reykjavík, there are numerous ATM's (cash-point machines) open 24 hours. The unit of currency in Iceland is the króna (ISK). Icelandic bank notes are issued in denominations of 500, 1000, 5000 and 10000 kr., coins in circulation are 100, 50, 10, 5 and 1. GRÓ-FTP will help you open a bank account once your Icelandic Social Security ID numbers have been registered. The bank we will be using this time is Landsbankinn, and there are multiple branches around the city. Check www.landsbankinn.is for more information.

Post office

The closest post office for the fellows to visit is on Faxafen, Reykjavík 108, in the Skeifan district, or in the centre of Hafnarfjörður in the Fjörður shopping centre. Opening hours are from 09:00-17:00 only weekdays.

Time

Iceland is on Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) throughout the year and does not go on daylight saving time.

Public holidays from October - April

Business, banks and most stores are closed on the following holidays:

December 24th Christmas Eve, December 25th Christmas day, December 26th Boxing Day, December 31, New Year's Eve, January 1st New Year's Day, April 6th to 10th Easter Holiday, April 20th First day of summer holiday

Churches

The established religion in Iceland is Lutheran. The state church in Iceland is the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Most services are held every Sunday at 11:00, but it is best to consult the website of the church in question. The Philadelphia Church has weekly services in English. Address: Hátún 2, 105 Reykjavík. In addition, there is a Catholic Church and two Islamic communities.

Shops

In general, shops & supermarkets are open almost every day from 10am to 6pm. Most supermarkets are open on Sunday as well. The most reasonably priced supermarket is called Bónus and after-hours supermarkets tend to be much more expensive. The following opening hours are of those from the GRÓ House area.

Skeifan District

The GRÓ House is located next to the district called Skeifan, where you can find almost everything you need. There are 3 supermarkets (Bonus, Krónan, Hagkaup), electronics store (Elko), house goods (Rúmfatalagerinn), liquor shop (Vínbúðin), books and stationary shop (A4), vegan supermarket (Vegan búðin) and special stores that sells food items from outside Iceland and Europe (Dai Phat Asian Supermarket, Istanbul Market).

Kringlan Indoor Shopping Centre (has 2 grocery shops).

Monday - Friday 10:00 - 18:30
Saturday 11:00 - 18:00
Sunday 12:00 - 17:00

Grocery shops/Supermarkets

Bonus (It is cheapest to buy food here.)

Opens everyday 10:00 - 20:00

Krónan

Opens everyday 9:00 - 21:00

Hagkaup

Opens 24 hours

Flea market

You can buy both food (uniquely horse meat) and clothes

Saturday - Sunday: 11:00 - 17:00.

Location: Tryggvagötu 19, Old Harbour Grófin Reykjavík Kvosin, 101 Reykjavík

Second-hand clothes shops

Red Cross stores

Monday - Friday: 10:00 - 18:00

Saturday from: 12:00 - 16:00.

Location: Laugarvegur 12 and Laugarvegur 116, 101 Reykjavík.

Fermata/Verzlanahöllin

Monday - Friday: 11:00 - 18:00

Saturday - Sunday: 12:00 - 17:00

Grettisgata 4, 101 Reykjavík.

Góði hirðirinn

Monday - Friday: 12:00 - 18:00

Saturday: 12:00 - 16:00

Alcohol stores in Reykjavík

The shops are called Vínbúðin, and there are nine liquor stores in Reykjavík, all run by the State. Website: vinbud.is.

Monday - Friday: 10:00 - 20:00

Saturday: 11:00-18:00

Places you can get winter clothing

Icewear

66°North

Nordic Store (Hand-knit sweaters)

The Handknitting Association of Iceland (Hand-knit products)

How to travel in Reykjavik and Iceland

Moving around in Reykjavik

Public transport and your BUS pass

On arrival, fellows will be provided with a BUS card which is registered in each person's name. This card allows you to travel without charge as often as you wish on public buses within the capital area. The public bus operator is called a STRÆTÓ. The new bus card system is called KLAPPIÐ, which is still part of the old bus operator.

Go to the website bus.is or straeto.is, where you can access information about bus routes and times. The website allows you to enter in your destination and locate the next available bus. The STRÆTÓ App is worth downloading onto your phone if you have a smart phone to track buses. With this app, you can see exactly where the next available bus is on the route in real time.

If the app is confusing, you can also rely on Google Maps, and it tells you the most convenient mode of transport.

Travelling by bus (Strætó)

The two main bus hubs are located at Hlemmur and in Breiðholt (Mjódd) in the eastern part of the city. The buses call at all the main bus stops served by the public bus service or Strætó b.s. (Mjódd, Grensás, Hlemmur and Lækjargata).

See the schedule on this website: <http://www.bus.is/leidakerfi/>

Further information: <http://www.straeto.is/english>

On weekdays, 07.00-19.00 most buses arrive every 15 - 20 minutes, however only every 30 minutes during the evening and at weekends.

Taxi:

Hreyfill

Instructions: You need to call them to arrange a pickup. It is often difficult to stop a moving taxi or find an empty taxi at taxi stands.

Tel: +354-588 5522

Traffic rules

Driving Licenses: You can drive in Iceland for up to 6 months on your foreign licenses outside of the European Economic Area. It is recommended that you get international driving licences alongside your national licences, especially if your license is not in English.

Traffic Rules: Driving in Iceland is on the right-hand side of the road. Road signals follow the international pattern. However, the rules concerning roundabouts are very different; the driver in the inside lane of a roundabout has priority to drive off the roundabout and the traffic in the outside lane must give way.

Traffic Safety: Seat belts must be worn by all passengers. Headlights must be used at all times of the day and night, all year.

Speed Limit: The general speed limit is 50 km/h in urban areas, 80km/h on gravel roads in rural areas and 90 km/h on paved highway roads.

Alcohol: The laws are strict in Iceland with regard to driving under the influence of alcohol. They are also strictly enforced.

For more information, check <https://iceland.nordicvisitor.com/travel-guide/information/driving-in-iceland/>

Calling someone in Iceland.

All numbers in Iceland are seven-digit numbers. No area codes are necessary, you dial the number directly.

International calls: When calling a country outside Iceland, you dial without interruption: the international code (00), then the country code, the area code, and finally the number. If you need help in finding a phone number abroad, you can call 118 for information.

Tipping

Service and VAT are invariably included in prices in Iceland. You do not need to tip in restaurants.

Car Rental

If you have a driving licence, you can rent a car, either short term or long term. For short term, you can go to company website, while long term rentals require you to contact the company to set up a quote and contract. Places you can rent cars in Reykjavík:

www.bluecarrental.is

www.hertz.is

www.thrifty.is

www.avis.is

www.europcar.com

Entertainment

Swimming pools (Sundlaug)

There are seven swimming pools around Reykjavik, the capital city of Iceland. Geothermal water. Outside and inside pools, hot tubs, steam bath, sun benches, gym room, massage, automatic massage, hydro massage, water gym, etc.

Website: <https://reykjavik.is/en/swimming-pools> and sundlaugar.is



Cinemas (Bíó)

Reykjavik has 7 cinemas with a total of over 20 projection halls. Most of the new films shown are from the US, although there are a limited number of European films shown as well, for example Bíó Paradís at Hverfisgata 54, website: bioparadis.is All films (on general release) are shown with the original soundtrack and subtitled in Icelandic. Occasionally, there are special film festivals with films from all over the world. See the daily papers for further details.

The Culture House (Þjóðmenningarhúsið).

Located on Hverfisgata 15, Tel: +354 545 1400. email: thodmenning@thodmenning.is

Harpa Concert Hall

This is the home of the:

The Iceland Symphony Orchestra. Website: www.sinfonia.is

The Icelandic Opera. Website: harpa.is

Tel: +354 5285050

The National Theatre

Hverfisgata 19. Website: leikhusid.is

Most performances, however, are in Icelandic.

Long distance coach station and FLY BUS

BSÍ Travel, Reykjavik Bus Terminal, located at Vatnsmýrarvegi 10. Tel: 580-5400

Tourist information

The official Tourist Information Centre is in the City Hall at Tjarnargata 11. However, you can also find unofficial tourist information offices throughout the downtown area. Opening hours: Daily 8:00-20:00.

