2027 FAQ for Japanese Nationals applying for a scholarship under the Joint Japan / World Bank Graduate Scholarship Program

Updated August 2026

WHERE YOU CAN STUDY

Can I get a scholarship to any graduate program subject or degree?

No. This scholarship is available for studying only at a master's program or a PhD program that is housed completely outside Japan and focusing on a development-related field. Graduate degrees related to Foreign Service, Diplomacy, Business (including MBAs) and Law (including LLMs), Medicine (including MDs) are not eligible for financing by the JJ/WBGSP scholarship. Fully online programs and joint programs with a Japanese university are not eligible either. Examples of qualified degrees can be found on the list of Participating Programs posted on the JJ/WBGSP website. Japanese nationals are encouraged but not restricted to applying to a participating program.

Can I get a scholarship to any distance learning / online graduate program?

No.

Can I get this scholarship for undergraduate studies, or non-degree graduate studies?

No. This scholarship does not sponsor undergraduate studies, distance learning programs, short-term or part-time training, conferences, seminars, and fields of study not related to development.

I am currently a student. Can I receive a JJ/WBGSP scholarship for the program I am currently studying?

Yes, as long as you require at least one more year of study at the start of the upcoming academic year. JJ/WBGSP funding will not pay for expenses taking place during Spring 2026 sessions.

Can I apply in 2027 using a 2026 admission letter that was deferred one-year and unconditionally by a graduate program that is outside Japan and in a development-related field?

Yes. In the application field for uploading the admissions letter, please upload the document from the university graduate program indicating its agreement to defer your unconditional admission (except for financing and/or medical certificate of good health) to 2027.

Can I apply now for a scholarship to a master's degree program that would start after the upcoming 2027-28 academic year?

No.

BENEFITS

Will this scholarship pay tuition fees for distance learning courses that are either required or optional for my graduate program?

No.

Does the scholarship support visa applications and related expenses?

No.

Does the scholarship cover costs to bring and support family members during my studies?

No.

Will the JJ/WBGSP Secretariat provide support for or respond to inquiries regarding an applicant's family members wanting to obtain a visa to accompany the scholar while studying abroad?

No.

What is the value of the scholarship?

We do not provide this information to applicants. The funding amount depends on several factors including the length and location of the master's degree or PhD program you were admitted to.

The university is asking me as an admitted student to make a deposit to secure my spot for enrollment. Will you make this deposit on my behalf?

No, you will need to make the required deposit.

ELIGIBILITY

Do I need to upload either: (i) an unconditional (except for financing and/or medical certificate of good health) letter of admission from; or (ii) documentation that I am a currently enrolled student at a graduate program, for my application to be reviewed?

Yes.

I do not expect to receive an unconditional (except for financing and/or medical certificate of good health) letter of admission from a development-related graduate program until after the JJ/WBGSP scholarship deadline. Can I still apply this year?

No, but if you get admitted by the university and don't have funding for this year, you may want to ask for deferral from the university for one year and apply to a JJ/WBGSP scholarship if it is offered again next year.

I am currently waitlisted for admission to a development-related graduate program. Is it possible to apply with my current status because the decision the final decision will be released after the JJ/WBGSP scholarship deadline?

No, but if you get admitted to the university and don't have funding for this year, you may want to ask for deferral from the university for one year and apply to a JJ/WBGSP scholarship if it is offered again next year.

Is there a minimum or maximum age limit?

No.

Can I still apply if I am receiving a partial scholarship from another source for the same graduate program I am applying to?

Yes. This will not affect the review of your application. If you are awarded a JJ/WBGSP scholarship, the benefits will be adjusted accordingly.

Do I have to work immediately after I complete my scholarship, or can I continue with graduate studies?

The scholar is expected to seek work in international development immediately after attaining the graduate degree the JJ/WBGSP scholarship is funding. That may occur after the time the scholarship funding ends. For example, if the JJ/WBGSP scholarship funds 1-2 years of a 5-year PhD program, the scholar is not expected to seek work in international development until after completing the PhD program.

I have already earned a graduate degree but meet all the criteria mentioned in the application guidelines. Am I still eligible for this scholarship to pursue another graduate degree?

Yes. You can have already earned a graduate degree and still apply for a JJ/WBGSP scholarship for another graduate degree.

Am I eligible to apply if I have already received funding from the Government of Japan in pursuit of a graduate degree?

Yes.

How can I tell if I meet the eligibility requirements?

It is up to the applicant to assess whether or not he/she is eligible. The eligibility requirements are clearly listed in the application guidelines. The JJ/WBGSP Secretariat will not respond to any inquiry that presents an applicant's circumstances (including the type of admissions letter from the university) and requests assistance in assessing the applicant's eligibility. It is up to an applicant to apply the eligibility criteria to their particular circumstances.

No exceptions are made to the eligibility requirements.

Do you make exceptions regarding the required number of years of paid development-related experience since obtaining a bachelor's degree?

No. All eligibility criteria are strictly adhered to. No exceptions are made.

Does work on a master's program considered as formal employment, particularly if it was a master's program related to development?

A period of graduate study, even if it was related to development, does not count toward the development-related employment requirement.

Can a paid internship that is development-related be counted toward meeting the eligibility criteria for development-related experience?

Yes.

Can an unpaid internship count toward meeting the eligibility criteria for development-related experience?

No.

Can unpaid volunteer work that is development-related count toward meeting the eligibility criteria for development-related experience?

No.

Can part-time paid work be counted toward meeting the eligibility criteria for development-related experience?

Yes. Please be explicit in your CV and the application form regarding when and where you worked part-time. On your CV, please indicate the average percentage of time per week you worked. For example, if you worked 50% of the time continuously for six years in a development-related field since earning a bachelor's degree, you have fulfilled the requirement in terms of number of years of employment.

What should I do if the type of my "development- related" work does not match the topics in the dropdown menu in the application form, or if I am not sure if my work constitutes "development-related"?

If none of the options of topics in the application form match your professional experience, but you think it may be development-related, then you must define your development-related topic in the last option: "other please specify." In the review process (and not before), the JJWBGSP will determine if that topic is development-related.

Am I eligible to apply if I am working in Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC)?

Yes, you can apply. Do not check the option "Government of Japan or its Agencies (including Ministries, Central Bank, JICA, and local governments)" in the employment section.

I applied for a JJ/WBGSP scholarship in the past but was not selected. Can I apply this year?

Yes, your application will be reviewed if you meet the eligibility criteria

APPLICATION PROCESS

Can I apply using my mobile phone?

The JJ/WBGSP application portal is not configured to be used by a mobile phone. You should use a desktop / laptop computer.

Can I apply for a JJ/WBGSP scholarship if I am neither currently enrolled in a development-related graduate degree program nor have received an unconditional (except for financing and/or medical certificate of good health) admission letter to a development-related graduate degree program?

No. At the time you submit a scholarship application, you must have proof of being currently enrolled or unconditionally (except for financing and/or medical certificate of good health) admitted to a development-related graduate degree program.

If I am accepted into several graduate programs, can I make several applications for the JJ/WBGSP scholarship?

No. You must choose the one university graduate program for which you seek JJ/WBGSP funding. Individuals who submit more than one application will be disqualified.

Can I submit the online application form before receiving the recommendation letters?

No

How will I find out if I was awarded the scholarship? How will I find out if I was not awarded the scholarship?

All successful applicants will hear from the JJ/WBGSP Secretariat likely by June 1st, 2027. The JJ/WBGSP Secretariat will inform all selected applicants. Unsuccessful applicants will also be notified.

Can I apply again next year?

Having a previous unsuccessful application(s) is not a factor determining the merits of an application. Applicants must meet all eligibility criteria corresponding to the year in which they apply.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After I submit the Recommendation Request Form, can I change my recommender?

If the recommender has submitted his/her recommendation, you cannot replace that recommender with another person.

If the recommender has not yet submitted his/her recommendation, you can delete your request for that recommender in your Recommendation Request Form and then return to the Recommendation Request Form and insert the contact information of the replacement.

Can anyone provide a professional recommendation?

No. Recommenders must be individuals who can attest to your professional experiences at work. Recommendations from your current or former supervisor(s) are also preferred but not required.

Can a professor who I studied under provide a professional recommendation?

No. Recommendations from professors who know you only in your capacity as a student are not acceptable for the requirement of a professional recommendation. For example, if you know a professor because you took his/her course(s), that is not considered a professional relationship. Alternatively, if you know a professor because he was your colleague or supervisor at the time you were a hired lecturer at the university, that is a professional relationship. In that instance, the professor can provide a recommendation regarding your professional qualifications / attributes that he/she has observed in the work environment. If the same person also had you as a student, observations from your professor/student relationship cannot be part of the recommendation.

Can a professor I studied under provide the required academic recommendation?

Yes

May I substitute a professional reference for the required academic reference if I have been out of school for a while?

No.

Can I draft the recommendation for my recommender, in part or in its entirety?

No. The recommendation must be drafted and submitted by the recommender.

May I give a personal email address for my recommenders?

If an institutional email address is available, please use the institutional email address. If one is not available, you may submit the recommender's Gmail, yahoo or other personal email address. This email address you provide must be accessible only by your recommender.

Can a person providing a professional recommendation for me write in any language?

No. Recommenders must write their recommendation in either English (or in French or Spanish if the master's or PhD program you are targeting is taught in French or Spanish)

Can my recommender share the email requesting their reference with my other recommender?

No. Each recommender will receive an individual email with a unique link to an online reference form he/she must complete. Only his/her reference can be submitted using this link. If the recommender shares the link with other recommenders, his/her reference may be overridden.

QUESTIONS SPECIFIC TO THE APPLICATION FORM

What does "*" following a question mean?

A "*" next to a question in the online application indicates this information is required to complete and submit the application form.

Do I have to complete each question of the application form?

No, only those questions followed by a "*"

Can I change any information on my application form (including my email address) after I have submitted it?

No.

I have changed my last name because of getting married, so my documents do not all have the same name. What do I do about that?

In the last question in the Statement of Purpose explain why the name(s) in your uploaded document(s) vary compared to the name you use for the application form.

The ordering of dates (month / day / year) in the application form are different than the custom in my home country, so information given by my references may be different than what is written in the application form.

In the application form and the CV you upload, please conform to the format provided (month / day / year) and (month / year). During the review we understand information provided by references may use other conventions, e.g. (day / month / year).

What type of document can I use as proof of employment if I am self-employed or a founder of an organization?

If you are self-employed or the founder of an organization in which you work, you must upload the government issued document that indicates when the organization (business or non-for-profit) was registered with the government. If the organization is not registered, it is not considered formal employment, and your work in that organization should be listed in the VOLUNTEER page of the application form.

How do I complete the "Current Employment" section of the Application Form if I have more than one current employer?

In the CURRENT EMPLOYMENT Section, enter the employer with which you are working the most. In the EMPLOYMENT HISTORY section, enter the other current employer(s) and indicate that the end-date is Scholarship Application deadline date. And in the last question in the STATEMENT OF PURPOSE, note that you have more than one current employer.

How do I complete the "Country" question in the "Employment" section if I am/was working on a country, but I am/was based in a different country?

You should enter the country in which you are/were stationed.

What should I do if the country I want to select as my country of employment is not listed?

If the country is not listed on the drop-down menu, choose "other" which is at the end of the list.

QUESTIONS ABOUT UPLOADING DOCUMENTS INTO THE APPLICATION FORM

Is there a standard format or guide for naming the files that needs to be uploaded in the application portal?

There are no requirements as to how you name the files you upload.

I have uploaded the wrong file. How to delete that so that I can upload the correct file?

If you have not yet submitted your application, from your saved draft application, you can just select a new file and it will overwrite the first one you uploaded.

I have more than one diploma/certificate related to my most recent degree. Which one do I send?

If you have multiple diplomas/certificates related to your most recent degree, please scan all of the diplomas into one file and upload them all through the online application. An academic transcript cannot be uploaded in place of a diploma/certificate. A scanned copy of the diploma/certificate you received at the time of graduation is sufficient. You do not have to ask the university for a newly certified copy of the diploma you received.

Should I upload additional documentation of academic performance, such as my transcript or Grade Point Average (GPA)?

No.

Are there any restrictions on the format or number of pages for my CV?

Please refer to the Application Guidelines.

What should I do if I cannot document my employment record because my employer no longer exists?

Please make note of this problem when you answer the last question of the "Statement of Purpose." If you are selected as a finalist, we may ask you to produce other corroborating documentation before a scholarship is provided.

How can I upload a scanned copy of my signature onto the Signature Page?

Applicants must type their first and last name in the field for the Signature. Do not attempt to upload a scanned / electronic signature.

TROUBLESHOOTING AND COMMUNICATIONS WITH JJ/WBGSP SECRETARIAT

Can I ask JJ/WBGSP Secretariat a question about my application?

Please read carefully all documentation provided, including these FAQs, as the JJ/WBGSP Secretariat will NOT answer any inquiries addressed to scholarshipapplicants@worldbank.org unless the response cannot be found within the information already provided. See the Application Guidelines for further guidance.

One of my recommenders says she/he has not received the email sent from the JJ/WBGSP with my recommendation request. What should I do?

First please verify that the email address you submitted for your recommender on your application is correct, and that you entered the email address alone in the response field without any other text, extra email addresses, or other characters.

Second, please contact your recommender to ensure the email (from no-reply@webportalapp.com) has not gone to another location. Sometimes the email is automatically moved to his/her "Junk" folder. If the email is associated with an institution, you should also ask your recommender to check if his/her institution imposes any security settings or restrictions to filter or prevent emails from untrusted email addresses to reach his/her Inbox.

In either of these cases, make sure the recommender adds **Japan/World Bank Graduate Scholarship Program <no-reply@webportalapp.com>** to his/her trusted contacts list.

Third, if she/he still cannot find the email, please try to send the recommendation request again.

Finally, if the recommender has an alternate email address, you may want to try sending the request again to the alternate email.

If none of the steps above work, please send an email to scholarshipapplicants@worldbank.org explaining the issue. Be sure to include your full name and the name and email of your recommender.

One of my recommenders is getting the message: "You no longer need to upload the form for this applicant" and she/he cannot submit his/her recommendation for me. What can be done?

The reason this recommender cannot submit his/her recommendation is because the applicant deleted his/her contact from the Recommendation Request Form.