Joint Japan/World Bank Graduate Scholarship Program (JJ/WBGSP)

2027 APPLICATION GUIDELINES FOR JAPANESE NATIONALS*

Updated August 2026

***ATTENTION!** These Guidelines are valid only for JJ/WBGSP scholarship applicants who are Japanese nationals. For information on the JJ/WBGSP application process for developing country nationals, please visit:* https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/scholarships#3

I. OVERVIEW

The JJ/WBGSP provides scholarships for no more than a two-year duration to a limited number of Japanese mid-career professionals who are dedicated to the alleviation of poverty and enhanced shared prosperity in developing countries, and who have been admitted to or are currently enrolled full-time in a master's or PhD graduate degree program outside of Japan and in development-related fields. Please note that applicants seeking master's degrees are encouraged (but not required) to seek admissions in graduate programs listed on the website under Participating Programs. Online graduate degree, or graduate degrees related to Foreign Service, Diplomacy, Business (including MBAs) and Law (including LLMs), Medicine (including MDs), or any joint programs with a Japanese university are not eligible for financing by the JJ/WBGSP scholarship.

After earning their degree, JJ/WBGSP-funded Japanese national scholars are expected to advance their professional career with a keen focus on the alleviation of poverty and enhanced shared prosperity in developing countries.

Benefits:

The scholarship is fully funded by the Government of Japan, and provides for each scholarship recipient the following benefits during the scholarship period:

• Economy class air travel from his/her home country to the host university, if the scholar is not yet enrolled in the graduate program. If at the end of the scholarship period the scholar has completed all requirements to earn the graduate degree, the scholarship will also fund economy class air travel from the host university to Japan or a developing country where the scholar has secured employment.

• For the duration of the scholarship period, tuition for his/her graduate program and the cost of basic medical insurance that can be obtained through the university.

• While on campus during the scholarship period, a monthly subsistence allowance to cover living expenses, including books. The amount of the allowance varies depending on the host country.

The JJ/WBGSP scholarship does not cover:

- Family expenses, including costs to bring and support family members
- Extra-curricular courses or training
- Language training not provided by the graduate program
- Additional travel during the scholarship period
- Expenses related to research, supplementary educational materials, field trips, participation in workshops/seminars, or internships; or
- Educational equipment such as computers.

Note: The JJ/WBGSP scholarship may only supplement, and does not duplicate, any other source of financial support (i.e. sponsorship, scholarship, fellowship, etc.) you might have. If selected as a finalist, and again if awarded a scholarship, you must inform the JJ/WBGSP if there are other institutions funding you during your studies, the amount of funding, and the uses of the funds. The JJ/WBGSP stipend may be withdrawn completely or partially if during the scholarship period the Program has evidence of undeclared institutions funding you during your studies.

Selection Process: For those applicants who meet all application requirements (see requirements below), the JJ/WBGSP Secretariat follows the following process and criteria to review completed applications, with the aim of identifying the candidates most likely to make significant contributions to the field of development after completing their graduate studies.

Step 1: Two qualified assessors independently review each eligible application and score the application on a scale of 1 to 10, taking into account four main factors and the degree of cohesion among them:

(i) Quality of Academic Experience and Recommendation (20% weight)
(ii) Quality of Professional Recommendations (20% weight)
(iii) Quality of Professional Experience (20% weight)
(iv) Commitment to International Development Career (40% weight)

Note the relatively lower weight for academic excellence is because the eligibility criteria of admission to a graduate program pre-screens for academic excellence.

The JJ/WBGSP Secretariat uses the average score of the two assessors, the requirement of unconditional admission (except for financing and/or medical certificate) to a development-related graduate program outside Japan and listed in the submitted application form, and the following other aspects of JJ/WBGSP's objectives to select the finalists:

- Maintaining a reasonable distribution of awards across gender, taking into account the distribution of eligible applications across gender
- Giving scholarships to those applicants who, other things being equal, appear to have limited financial resources

Step 2: The JJ/WBGSP Secretariat presents the finalists to the JJ/WBGSP Steering Committee (composed of members of the World Bank Board of Directors and WB management) for final review and selection of the winners of the award. The JJ/WBGSP Secretariat informs the scholarship winners by June 2026.

Step 3: To receive scholarship benefits, winners will be required by JJ/WBGSP Secretariat to obtain and submit via email: (i) Within 3 business days of notification of winning the scholarships, a scanned copy of the identification page of the winner's passport or other legal document (birth or marriage certificate) that indicates nationality and date of birth, with the name IDENTICAL to the one submitted on the application form.; and (ii) At least 17 business days before traveling to the university (or in the case the scholar is already studying at least 17 business days before the scholarship period begins), a scanned copy of a certificate from a medical doctor that is less than three months old from the start date of the program and states the scholar is in good health. If the finalist is already enrolled in the graduate program, the scholarship will be contingent upon receiving a medical certificate of good health that is dated not more than three months prior to the offer of the scholarship.

APPLICATION PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS

To have a JJ/WBGSP application reviewed, applicants must fulfill the following two requirements:

1. **Meet the following eligibility criteria:**

- Be a Japanese national
- On or after the date the call for scholarship applications opens, not be an Executive Director, his/her alternate, and/or staff of any type of appointment (including temporary and consultant) of the World Bank Group (The World Bank, International Development Association, International Finance Corporation, Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency, and International Center for Settlements of Investment Disputes); or not be a close relative of the aforementioned by blood or adoption with the term "close relative" defined as: Mother, Father, Sister, Half-sister, Brother, Half-brother, Son, Daughter, Aunt, Uncle, Niece, or Nephew.
- Hold a bachelor's degree (or equivalent university degree) earned at least three years before the date of the Application Deadline.
- On or after the date the JJ/WBGSP scholarship application process opens, not be employed / staff or any type of appointment (including temporary and consultant) by the Government of Japan or its related agencies, including JICA, local governments and the Central Bank.
- Have at least 3 years of paid development-related employment acquired since earning a bachelor's degree (or equivalent university degree) and acquired within the past 6 years from the date of the Application Deadline. (See FAQs on how to count qualified part time employment toward this 3-year requirement).
- At the time of the application submission, be either admitted unconditionally (except for financing) or currently enrolled full-time in a graduate program (master's or PhD) outside of Japan in an area of study related to development or be currently employed full-time in development-related work pertaining directly to developing countries.

2. **Submit One Online Application:** An application will be accepted and reviewed if the applicant submits only one complete application electronically through the JJ/WBGSP application portal by the **application deadline of April 21st, 2027 at 12:00 noon EST.**

An application is considered complete if it includes:

a. **Two professional recommendation letters**, submitted online, from people who have direct knowledge of the applicant's professional work experience.

b. **One academic recommendation letter,** submitted online, from people who have direct knowledge of the applicant's academic work experience

and

c. **One completed Application Form** (which includes an applicant's agreement to conditions stated on the signature page of the application form) that is written in either in English or the language of their PhD or master's program.

Among other information, completing the Application Form includes uploading scanned copies of:

(i) documentation that proves the applicant meets the eligibility requirement with regard to the number of years of recent development-related work. (See FAQs for details regarding the extent and type of documentation required to be uploaded)

(ii) the applicant's bachelor's degree diploma, and if applicable, also the diploma of the applicant's most advanced graduate degree. (Do not upload a transcript as a substitute for a diploma).

(iii) C.V. using the format provided in Annex 2 and written in English or the language of the master's degree program for which the applicant is seeking JJ/WBGSP funding. If the work was not paid, do not include it in your CV. Instead, you can create a category "Volunteer Work" in your CV and list under that heading unpaid internships or other unpaid work.

(iv) unconditional (except for financing) Letter of Admission for the upcoming academic year to a master or doctorate program:

- for which the applicant is seeking JJ/WBGSP funding; and
- that is located outside of the applicant's country of citizenship and country of residence.

ATTENTION:

- You can draft but DO NOT SUBMIT a JJ/WBGSP Scholarship Application UNTIL YOU UPLOAD AN UNCONDITIONAL LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE from a PhD or master's program on a development-related field and at a university located outside Japan.

- *For either (i) or (ii), if document(s) are not in English or the language of the PhD or master's degree program being applied to, they must be translated into English or the language of the master's degree program. Both the document in the original language and the translated document must be uploaded into the Application Form. A required translation does not need to be certified. Applicants and recommenders can use a free online tool to translate words into English, without penalty for doing so. Paying for a certified translation is NOT required.*

Notes:

- *The link to the online application form is published on the JJ/WBGSP website .*

- *DO NOT USE A CELL PHONE TO APPLY, AS THE SOFTWARE IS DESIGNED ONLY TO BE ACCESSED BY A COMPUTER.*

- *An applicant that delivers an application (or any component of an application) in-person, by fax, email or postal mail will be disqualified.*

- *Individuals who submit more than one application will be disqualified.*

- *If an applicant is accepted unconditionally (except for financing) to more than one PhD or master's degree program, the applicant must decide before submitting his/her scholarship application which of the PhD or master's degree he/she seeks JJ/WBGSP funding for. If an applicant is selected for a JJ/WBGSP scholarship, he/she will not be able to transfer the scholarship to another PhD or master's degree program.*

- *It is up to the applicant to determine if she/he is eligible given her/his circumstances. The JJ/WBGSP Secretariat will not make that determination for you.*

Guidance on Professional Recommendation Process:

The applicant can have only two professional recommendations – one is not sufficient and three or more is not permitted.

The recommendations must be from people who can attest from direct observation to your professional qualifications regarding development-related work that was demonstrated after earning your bachelor's degree. We suggest, but do not require, that professional recommendations be from people who have recent (within the last six years) experience with you in such a professional setting. We suggest, but do not require, that at least one of the two required professional recommendations be from a current or former supervisor.

Both professional recommendations must come from people you worked with during and in the context of paid employment. For example, a recommendation from an applicant's volunteer work is not considered "professional" and hence would not fulfill this eligibility criterion.

Guidance on Academic Recommendation Process:

The applicant can have only one academic recommendation.

The recommendation must be from a professor you have collaborated with (or are collaborating with) on a research project / paper. We suggest, but do not require, that the academic recommendation be from people who have recent (within the last six years) experience with you in such an academic / research setting.

To fulfill the required two professional recommendations and one academic recommendation, **complete and submit the Recommendation Request Form in the online Application Form.** We suggest you first get the agreement from your recommender that he/she is willing to provide a recommendation and confirm their email address.

The Recommendation Request Form requires the applicant to identify the name, email address, and the recommender's relationship to the applicant, for each of the three recommenders. Use of personal email addresses, for example gmail, yahoo, and other similar email addresses, is permissible if there is no available email address from the recommender's institution. If a personal email is used, the JJ/WBGSP Secretariat may verify the professional association of your recommender as part of our review process. It is the applicant's sole responsibility to make sure the email contact information provided in the Recommendation Request Form is accurate.

Please Note:

- *Applicants can submit the Recommendation Request Form before submitting the Application Form.*

- *The JJ/WBGSP Secretariat suggests that an applicant first confirms with each recommender that she/he is willing to provide a recommendation and confirm her/his email address.*

- *The JJ/WBGSP Secretariat recommends that applicants submit the Recommendation Request Form as early as possible in their application process to give enough time for their recommenders to meet the application deadline. If the required recommenders do not submit their recommendations following the instructions you provided to them and by the application deadline date, the application will not be reviewed. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure his/her recommenders meet the application deadline.*

- *The applicant is not permitted to draft any part of a recommendation letter on behalf of the recommender.*

The recommender will be notified by email that you have asked him/her to provide a recommendation and will be instructed to submit the recommendation in English electronically to the application platform by the application deadline.
The system-generated email is usually sent to the recommender within five minutes of the applicant submitting the Recommendation Request Form. If the recommender does not receive the email, please ask him/her to check his/her junk mail folders for an email from **Japan/World Bank Graduate Scholarship Program <no-reply@webportalapp.com>**

Please make sure you follow up with your recommender(s) if any of your recommendations hasn't been received as we get closer to the deadline. If we do not receive the three required recommendations by the application deadline, your application will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed.

I. INQUIRIES FROM APPLICANTS

Please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), written in English and available on the JJ/WBGSP website, for any questions regarding the online application, the application process, and troubleshooting technical problems or other information presented on our website. On a as needed basis, the FAQs will be updated regularly and posted on our website during the call for applications.

If the answer to your question is not in the FAQs or in these Guidelines, you may submit your inquiry in English by email to: scholarshipapplicants@worldbank.org and under these conditions, you can expect a response within three business days. For technical problem inquiries, if at all possible, please include in your email a screenshot of the technical problem you encounter. **Note: Do not send inquiries to the company hosting the application software.**

Under no circumstances will the JJ/WBGSP Secretariat reply to any email inquiries pertaining to information already presented via our website, so please read all the documentation carefully. If we do not reply to your inquiry within three business days, that means we will not answer your email because the answer to your inquiry is available by reading information already posted on our website.

ATTENTION: We do not guarantee we will reply to ANY email received less than three business days before the application deadline. Because the application process is lengthy, the JJ/WBGSP Secretariat recommends that applications be submitted at least one week ahead of the deadline to avoid any last-minute issues.

II. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE SCHOLARSHIP

After you submit your application, it will go through a multi-step selection process, described in the "Selection Process" section of the JJ/WBGSP page on our website. For those applicants notified by June 2027 by the JJ/WBGSP Secretariat of their status as a finalist, the JJ/WBGSP will request the following additional information:

1. **Identification:** When the JJ/WBGSP Secretariat offers a scholarship, the finalist will be requested to submit a scanned copy of the identification page of his/her Passport , or in case the applicant lacks a valid Passport, he/she can provide another acceptable legal document (birth or marriage certificate), with the name IDENTICAL to the one submitted on the Application Form to the JJ/WBGSP Secretariat within three business days from the time the JJ/WBGSP Secretariat offers the scholarship.

2. **Medical Certificate:** After the JJ/WBGSP Secretariat offers a scholarship, and at least 21 days before traveling to the host university to commence the master program, the finalist will be requested to submit a scanned copy of a health certificate. This certificate must be less than three months old from the start date of their PhD or master's program and must be from a medical doctor stating the scholar is in good health to travel and study.

Please note: Failure to provide these two documents on time will result in disqualification.

ANNEX 1: Suggested list of development-related topics

FINANCE, COMPETITIVENESS AND INNOVATION

- Financial Stability & Integrity
- Financial Inclusion & Access
- Firms, Entrepreneurship & Innovation
- Markets, Technology & Digital Economy
- Long-Term Finance
- Climate & Risk Management

GOVERNANCE

- Strengthening Public Policy Processes
- Promoting Effective Resource Management
- Reinforcing Public Service Delivery
- Tax Administration and Tax Policy
- Strengthening the Public-Private Interface
- Understanding the Underlying Drivers and Enablers of Policy Effectiveness

MACROECONOMICS, TRADE AND INVESTMENT

- Designing and applying country-based diagnostics, development strategies, policy analysis and other analytical products for decision-making by Ministries of Finance, Trade, Economy and Production in their pursuit of reform agendas conducive to strengthening inclusive growth led by the private sector

POVERTY REDUCTION AND EQUITY/SHARED PROSPERITY

- Identifying key constraints that limit opportunities for productive employment, capital accumulation and investment in human capital by the poor and vulnerable households.
- Using data on poverty, equity and welfare for evidence-based public policy making and implementation
- Designing and implementing fiscal and social policies that can enhance the capacity of those at the bottom to contribute more actively to economic growth
- Developing and adopting effective risk management strategies and systems that contribute to sustainable poverty reduction and shared prosperity

EDUCATION

- For primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education: devise practical solutions for issues related to design of curricula, curriculum reform, instruction and pedagogy, and learning/measurement of learning,
- Organize, strengthen and manage an education system, and the delivery of services,
- Designing and implementing cost-effective and sustainable Early Childhood Development interventions
- Managing and developing an effective teacher workforce.
- Designing and applying emerging innovations in the education sector, including but not limited to those enabled by the use of information and communications technologies (ICTs).
- Designing and implementing reforms aimed at improving the effectiveness, equity, and efficiency of country education financing systems.

- Designing and implementing reforms aimed at issues of access related to disability and/or Inclusive Education

GENDER

- Health Sector
- Education Sector
- Social Protection
- Employment
- Ownership and Control of Assets
- Agriculture and Rural Development
- Financial Inclusion
- Enhancing Women's Voice and Agency and Engaging Men and Boys
- Gender-Based Violence

HEALTH, NUTRITION AND POPULATION

- Health Financing
- Public/Global Health
- Nutrition
- Population and Development
- Delivery of Health, Nutrition and Population services work for the poor

SOCIAL PROTECTION AND JOBS

- Skills Development
- Social Insurance and Pension
- Social Safety Nets
- Nexus with Gender
- Social Safety Net Programs' Delivery Systems

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

- Climate Smart Agriculture
- Food Quality
- Rural Livelihoods and Agriculture Employment
- Value Chains and Agribusiness competitiveness and commercialization.

CLIMATE CHANGE

- Energy
- Transport
- Climate-smart Land Use, Water and Food Security
- Finance
- Small Island States Resilience initiatives

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES

- Environmental Economics
- Pollution Management and Environmental Health
- Environmental Standards
- Fisheries
- Forests, Landscapes and Ecosystems
- Watersheds

SOCIAL, URBAN, RURAL & RESILIENCE

- Community-Driven Development
- City Management, Governance and Finance
- Land / GeoSpatial
- Disaster Risk Management
- Social Inclusion
- Social Sustainability and Standards
- Labor Influx and Labor Management
- Stability, Peace and Security
- Sustainable Urban Infrastructure and Services
- Territorial Development and Productivity
- Urban Poverty and Housing

WATER

- Hydropower & Dams
- Water in Agriculture
- Urban Water Supply and Sanitation services delivery
- Rural Water Supply and Sanitation services delivery
- Water Security and Integrated Resource Management
- Water, Poverty and the Economy – policies, institutions, and governance – related to the role of water in an economy
- Social Inclusion in Water

ENERGY & EXTRACTIVES

- Clean Energy
- Energy Access
- Energy Economics, Markets and Institutions
- Extractives Industries
- Hydropower & Dams
- Power Systems

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Infrastructure Management & Finance, including Public Private Partnerships & Guarantees
- Development Corridors & Regional Integration
- Roads
- Air Transport
- Railways

- Transport & Digital Development
- Urban Transport
- Resilient Transport in context of Disaster Risk management

DEVELOPMENT IN CONTEXT OF FRAGILITY, CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE

- Development-Security Nexus
- Humanitarian-Development Nexus
- Design and implementation of development projects in FCV

ANNEX 2: CV TEMPLATE

Instruction: To be completed by the applicant and uploaded In the DOCUMENT SECTION of the Application Form.

NAME OF APPLICANT:_____

SECTION ONE: EMPLOYMENT RECORD AFTER EARNING BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR EQUIVALENT (mandatory)

*Instruction to JJ/WBGSP Applicant: Starting with the most recent first, fill in the following fields for EACH department/unit in an organization that provided you **paid employment** (including paid internship(s)) since completing your bachelor's degree.*

a. NAME OF ORGANIZATION:_____

b. NAME OF DEPARTMENT/UNIT:_____

c. START DATE (MONTH/YEAR): _____

d. END DATE: (MONTH/YEAR): _____

e. JOB TITLE OF MOST RECENT POSITION:_____

f. ANSWER YES/NO: WAS THIS POSITION A PROMOTION FROM THE MOST RECENT POSITION YOU HELD AT THIS ORGANIZATION THAT EMPLOYED YOU?:

g. IN BULLET FORMAT, LIST YOUR KEY JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:

h. IN BULLET FORMAT, DESCRIBE WHAT YOU CONSIDER TO BE YOUR MOST IMPORTANT ACCOMPLISHMENT THAT CAN BE UNIQUELY AND DIRECTLY ATTRIBUTED TO YOUR EFFORTS:

i. DESCRIBE OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

SECTION TWO (optional):

*Instruction to JJ/WBGSP Applicant: Below, you may provide any other **types** of information typically found in CVs/Resumes (list of publications, skills, etc.) that you believe may be relevant to assess your scholarship application, and have NOT been presented in other sections of this CV or in another section of the Application Form. Specifically:*

- *D*o NOT provide additional information on EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCES
- *Do NOT provide education details prior to earning your bachelor's degree (or equivalent).*
- *Do NOT provide additional information on education degrees that you present in the EDUCATION SECTION of the application form.*

SECTION THREE: EDUCATION (optional)

Instruction: You may describe your education background AFTER secondary school, but do so only if the information is not already presented in the EDUCATION Section of the application form