

2021 MEXT Research Scholarship
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
Consulate-General of Japan in Chicago

Please note that due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, in some circumstances such as travel restrictions or curfews, there are possibilities that the selection process will be canceled, or applicants will not be able to depart to Japan even after being selected as scholarship students.

1.) What is the MEXT Research Scholarship?

The Ministry of Education, Culture Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT; Monbukagakusho) Research Scholarship is a Japanese government scholarship that allows non-Japanese citizens to spend 1.5 – 2 years studying in graduate courses at a Japanese university either as a non-degree student or a degree-seeking student.

2.) What are the benefits?

MEXT will provide roundtrip airfare to Japan, full tuition and any university entrance fees, along with a monthly stipend: ¥143,000 (non-degree Research students); ¥144,000 (Master's/professional degree students); ¥145,000 (doctoral program students). An additional ¥2,000 - ¥3,000 monthly stipend may be provided to those students doing field research in designated regions. (As of the 2020 Japanese fiscal year. The amount of the stipend is subject to change).

3.) What fields of study are acceptable for the MEXT Research Scholarship?

We accept applications in any field of research. In the past, the Consulate-General of Japan in Chicago has sent MEXT Research Scholars doing research in fields as diverse as medicine, fine art, astrophysics, computer programming, business, ancient Japanese literature, sociology, Japanese hip-hop, ecology, calligraphy, and more.

4.) Who is eligible to apply?

To apply through the Consulate-General of Japan in Chicago, applicants must (a) Be a United States citizen (b) Be born on or after April 2, 1986 (c) Have a bachelor's degree by April or September, 2018 (d) Be a resident of a state in the Chicago Consulate's 10-state Midwest jurisdiction [Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin]. Please see Guideline #3 for more information.

5.) I am not a U.S. citizen/ resident of a state in the Chicago Consulate's 10-state jurisdiction? Can I still apply?

You can still apply for the MEXT Scholarship, but you will need to do so through the Japanese diplomatic mission responsible for your country/area. To find your nearest Embassy/Consulate-General/Consulate Office, please see this link:
http://www.mofa.go.jp/about/emb_cons/mofaserv.html

6.) What is the application timeline?

Applications will be posted on our MEXT Scholarship website in June; applications are due Monday, September 14, 2020. Those selected to have an interview and exams will sit for them at the Japanese Consulate in Chicago on September 30, 2020 (tentative); Those recommended by the Consulate (in coordination with the Embassy of Japan in Washington, DC) will then have to directly contact up to three Japanese universities of their choice to obtain admission or a letter of provisional acceptance.

Applicants must have gained admittance to at least one university by the end of September (see the Placement Preference Form for more information). Secondary screening will then be conducted by MEXT. Final decisions will come before June 2021. Scholarship recipients will then depart for Japan in September 2021 or October 2021 (departure date is determined by the university you will attend - **please note there will be no April departures for the Research Scholarship in 2021**).

7.) How do I fill out the Academic Background (Section #11) section?

List your entire academic career from first grade through your current or most recent academic year. Please include extended breaks (such as summer breaks) in the academic year. See the example chart at the end of this document.

8.) The Application asks for a copy of my senior thesis; however I did not write a senior thesis. What should I do?

We are aware that many American college students do not write a senior thesis. Instead, we ask that you submit a copy of a major paper or project you have completed that relates to your intended field of study in Japan.

9.) Do I need to have majored in the Field of Study I intend to pursue in Japan?

Applicants should apply for the field of study they majored in at their university, or a related field. Your field of study must be a subject which you will be able to study, and take graduate-level courses in, at a Japanese university.

10.) How detailed should I make my Field of Study and Research Program Plan?

The Research Program Plan should be something you would feel comfortable submitting as a Research Proposal to a graduate school in the U.S. While we understand research focuses may change, you should give us a specific account of your intended research topic, methodology, and how your research fits into current research being done in the field. You must also tell us why this research must be done at a Japanese university.

11.) Can the MEXT Research Scholarship lead to a degree?

Applicants can choose to apply for either (a) a non-degree Research term (b) a Master's degree (c) a PhD or (d) a professional degree such as a JD or MBA. Please note that applicants who apply for a degree program may need to take an additional entrance exam by their desired university/faculty at their own expense. Please see Guideline #3 for more information.

Alternatively, applicants can apply for the non-degree Research term and then, while at the university in Japan, apply for a Master's, doctoral, or professional degree program at that university. If accepted into a degree program, the MEXT Scholarship will then extend to cover the degree program.

12.) What is the difference between an Embassy/Consulate Recommendation and a University Recommendation?

University Recommendations for the MEXT Scholarship are when a university in Japan recommends a student for the scholarship. This is a separate application and acceptance track from the Embassy/Consulate recommendations. You will need to directly contact a university in Japan to inquire about university recommendations.

13.) Where can I find information about universities/professors in Japan?

You can begin by searching or browsing the Research Map of Japan (<https://researchmap.jp/auth/login?lang=en>) which lists researchers in Japan by name, field, university, and location. You can also look at the Program for Leading Graduate Schools (<http://www.jsps.go.jp/j-hakasekatei/saitaku.html>; in Japanese), which lists programs endorsed by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (it also promotes humanities and social science programs).

14.) I live abroad. Can I apply for the MEXT Scholarship?

You can apply for the MEXT Scholarship from abroad. In general, if selected for an interview, you MUST return to the United States for the interview and exams at the Consulate-General of Japan in Chicago on the designated day.

15.) Can I interview and take the exams online?

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are currently looking into the feasibility of holding online interviews. However, we do not know yet if that will be an option. Exams will likely need to be taken in person. We will have more information about interviews/exams as the situation develops.

16.) What exams must be taken for the Research Scholarship?

All applicants selected for an interview will take a Japanese Language Exam and an English Language Exam.

17.) Do I need to know Japanese to get the scholarship?

It depends on your intended area of research. We do not necessarily require any Japanese language knowledge for candidates looking to do science or math-based research, or who are applying solely to programs with classes taught in English. Candidates looking to do research in fields like Japanese literature, history, etc., will need high levels of Japanese language proficiency to be considered. All applicants are expected to study and learn the Japanese language and Japanese culture.

18.) Do all Scholarship recipients take the 6-month intensive Japanese language course upon arrival in Japan?

Your university in Japan will decide whether or not they want you to take the Japanese language course before beginning your research term.

19.) Can I bring my family with me?

Yes, Research Scholarship recipients may bring their families with them. However, most universities will be unable to provide or arrange housing for families, so you will need to find housing on your own. Additionally, we strongly encourage you to have your family join you a month or so after your own arrival so you can have housing and other arrangements settled by the time they arrive.

20.) Can I have my application materials returned to me?

Unfortunately, no. Once application materials have been submitted to us at the Consulate-General of Japan in Chicago, they cannot be returned under any circumstances. We encourage you to make copies of all your application materials.

21.) How many copies of the application materials do I need to submit?

Please see Guideline #9 for more information about the required materials and how many originals vs. copies we require of each document. Please note that we need 1 original

Application Form with 1 original photograph of you attached, and with an original signature. We also need 1 photocopy of each original document submitted.

22.) Do my Letter of Recommendation writers need to use a Letter of Recommendation form?

No. Letter writers can simply submit a signed letter (on letterhead) instead of the form.

23.) Where do I mail my application?

Applications must be mailed to the following address by the stated deadline:

Japan Information Center
ATTN: MEXT Scholarships
737 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 1000
Chicago, IL 60611

For more information, please see the Guidelines posted on our website. If you have further questions, please contact MEXT Scholarship Coordinator Mr. Austin Gilkeson at austin.gilkeson@cg.mofa.go.jp or 312-280-0434 (please note that due to the current pandemic, Mr. Gilkeson is working from home and does not have access to his work phone).

Sample Chart for Academic Background (next page):

For the “Duration of Attendances” column, please include extended leave such as summer vacation (i.e.: duration of attendances for High School should be “4 years,” not “3 Years and 9 Months.” Only list months of attendance if you transferred schools).

	Name and Address of School (学校名及び所在地)	Year and Month of Entrance and Completion (入学及び卒業年月)	Duration of Attendances (修学年数)	Diploma or Degree awarded, Major subject, Skipper years/levels (学位・資格、専攻科目、 飛び級の状況)
Primary Education (初等教育) Elementary School (小学校)	Githens Elementary School Name (学校名) New York City, NY Location (所在地)	From 9/1986 (入学) To 8/1991 (卒業)	5 years (年) and months (月)	Grades 1-5
Secondary Education (中等教育) Middle School (中学)	Southwest Middle School Name (学校名) New York, NY Location (所在地) Apex Middle School Name (学校名) Chicago, IL Location (所在地)	From 9/1991 (入学) To 12/1992 (卒業) From 1/1993 (入学) To 8/1994 (卒業)	1 year (年) and 4 months (月) 1 year (年) and 8 months (月)	Grades 6-8
High School (高校)	Pearsontown High School Name (学校名) Chicago, IL Location (所在地)	From 9/1994 (入学) To 6/1998 (卒業)	4 years (年) and months (月)	Grades 9-12; High School Diploma
Tertiary Education (高等教育) Undergraduate (大学)	University of Illinois Name(学校名) Urbana-Champaign, IL Location (所在地)	From 9/1998 (入学) To 5/2002 (卒業)	4 years (年) and months (月)	Bachelor of Arts
Graduate Level (大学院)	University of Chicago Name (学校名) Chicago, IL Location (所在地)	From 9/2003 (入学) To 6/2005 (卒業)	2 years (年) and months (月)	Master of Arts
Total years of schooling mentioned above (以上を通算した全学校教育修学年数) As of April 1, 2016 (2016年4月1日現在)			18 Years and _____months (年) (月)	