

**2021 MEXT Japanese Studies Scholarship**  
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (Consulate-General of Japan in Chicago)

**NEW THIS YEAR: Due to the ongoing Covid-19 situation, interviews for the 2021 MEXT Japanese Studies Scholarship will be conducted entirely online (likely using Zoom or Microsoft Teams). We will NOT administer a written Japanese language exam. Instead, applicants' Japanese ability will be evaluated by their JLPT scores. You must have already passed the JLPT, and be able to provide a copy of your official certificate with Rank (N1, N2, etc.) and Score (eg. 110) in order to apply. Applications without JLPT certification will not be considered.**

**Please note the timeline for selection and departure may change due to the ongoing public health situation both here in the United States and in Japan.**

**All application materials must be both emailed and physically mailed in order to be considered (please see Question #11 for more information).**

**1.) What is the MEXT Japanese Studies Scholarship?**

The Ministry of Education, Culture Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT; Monbukagakusho) Japanese Studies Scholarship is a Japanese government scholarship that allows currently enrolled undergraduates to spend 1 year studying Japanese language and culture at a university in Japan. Scholarship recipients will pursue one of two programs: 1) An intense program to improve Japanese language skills, or 2) An intense program to learn more about Japan and Japanese culture.

**2.) What are the benefits?**

MEXT will provide roundtrip airfare to Japan, full tuition and any university entrance fees, along with a monthly stipend of ¥117,000. An additional ¥2,000 - ¥3,000 monthly stipend may be provided to those students studying in designated regions. (As of 2019 Japanese fiscal year; the amount of stipend is subject to change). *Please see Guideline #4 for more information.*

**3.) Who is eligible to apply?**

To apply through the Consulate-General of Japan in Chicago, applicants must:

- (1) Be a United States citizen.
- (2) In general, have been born between April 2, 1991, and April 1, 2003.
- (3) Have taken and passed the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT / 日本語入力試験) and be able to provide official certification with both your rank (N1, N2, etc.) and your score (eg: 110).

(4) Currently enrolled as an undergraduate at a four-year, accredited university in the United States, and be a major in a field related to Japanese language or culture (such as Japanese Language, Japanese Literature, Japanese Studies, etc). Applicants must be currently enrolled undergraduates both when they apply for the scholarship, during the scholarship, and after the scholarship is over. In other words, applicants must not graduate from their American university while on the scholarship. Please note that on the application, when you enter your expected graduation date, it should be your expected graduation date you would have if you spent a year in Japan as a Japanese Studies Scholar. In other words, if accepting the MEXT Scholarship would delay your US college graduation date, please list the delayed graduation date on the application.

(4) Have sufficient Japanese language ability to receive an education, in Japanese, at a Japanese university.

(5) 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 #1 for more information.*

#### **4.) I am not 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](http://www.mofa.go.jp/about/emb_cons/mofaserv.html)

#### **5.) Can I use this scholarship to fund my college's study abroad program in Japan?**

Not really. While it may be possible to gain admittance as a MEXT Japanese Studies Scholar to the same Japanese university that your university has an exchange program with, you would attend that university under the auspices, requirements, and timelines of the MEXT Japanese Studies Scholarship and NOT your university's exchange program. If you do receive the scholarship, you may also be placed at a different university. We recommend against attempting to use the MEXT Japanese Studies Scholarship as a way to fund a preexisting university study abroad program. In those cases, we recommend investigating the JASSO Student Exchange Support Program instead: [http://www.jasso.go.jp/scholarship/short\\_term\\_e.html](http://www.jasso.go.jp/scholarship/short_term_e.html)

#### **6.) Will I receive credit at my U.S. college for courses I take in Japan on the scholarship?**

That depends on your U.S. college. Since your college likely does not have a preexisting relationship with the Japanese university at which you study under the MEXT Scholarship, you may need to take extra steps to have the courses counted. Please note that some U.S. colleges may not give any credit for courses taken as a MEXT Japanese Studies Scholar. We encourage all applicants to discuss the matter with their academic advisor.

#### **7.) What is the application timeline?**

Applications are currently available on MEXT's Study Japan website: [https://www.studyinjapan.go.jp/en/smap\\_stopj-applications\\_japanese.html](https://www.studyinjapan.go.jp/en/smap_stopj-applications_japanese.html). They are due on Thursday, February 11th. Those selected for an interview will sit for an online interview (through Zoom or Microsoft Teams) on February 19th (tentative). Those recommended by the Consulate will then await final acceptance from Tokyo and placement at a Japanese university. This will likely come in the summer. Those who are selected to receive the scholarship are scheduled to depart for their university in Japan in September 2021 (\*\*please note this may change due to public health situations in Japan and/or the United States\*\*).

### **8.) What documents are required to apply?**

- (1) The completed Application Form with your *original signature*.
  - (2) A full color mugshot Photograph. The photo should be 4.5 cm x 3.5 cm. It needs to have been taken in the last 6 months. Please write your name and nationality (ie: USA) on the back. We can accept either an original photograph pasted to the application form OR a digital photo inserted onto the application form on the computer prior to printing. We cannot accept photos printed on regular paper that are physically pasted to the application form.
  - (3) The completed Placement Preference Form. Please see the "Course Guide" ([https://www.mext.go.jp/content/20201217-mxt\\_gakushi02-000011717\\_05.pdf](https://www.mext.go.jp/content/20201217-mxt_gakushi02-000011717_05.pdf)) for more information about universities that accept MEXT Japanese Studies Scholars.
  - (4) Official Transcripts from your current university.
  - (5) One Letter of Recommendation from your academic advisor.
  - (6) Certificate of Enrollment at your current university (this can be an official form issues by your school registrar's office, or, if your school does not offer that kind of document, a signed and/or sealed letter from the school's registrar's office).
  - (7) Health Form completed by a licensed physician (any licensed physician is eligible to complete the form). A doctor at your school's health center may be your best option. Please note that while a nurse or physician's assistant can examine you and fill in the results, the Health Form must be approved and signed by a licensed physician.
  - (8) Official Certificate of Passing of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT / 日本語入力試験) displaying your Rank (N1, N2, etc.) and Score (eg. 110).
- Incomplete applications will not be considered.

### **9.) What level of Japanese do I need to obtain the scholarship?**

While there is not an exact standard, we expect successful applicants will have passed either N1 or N2 of the JLPT.

### **10.) 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.

#### **11.) Where do I send my application materials?**

**All application materials must be sent by email to [austin.gilkeson@cq.mofa.go.jp](mailto:austin.gilkeson@cq.mofa.go.jp) AND physically mailed to the address below:**

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

Applications that are not both emailed and physically mailed, and applications received after the deadline, will not be considered.

*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@cq.mofa.go.jp](mailto:austin.gilkeson@cq.mofa.go.jp).*