



2026 MEXT Research Scholarship
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
For Consulate-General of Japan in Chicago

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 USA citizens to study in a Japanese university, either as a regular student or non-regular (non-degree) 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 2025 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 application 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 arts, 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, 1991** (c) Have a bachelor's degree by April or September, 2026 (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 [Guidelines](#) 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: https://www.mofa.go.jp/about/emb_cons/mofaserv.html

6.) I am a U.S. citizen/resident of a state in the Chicago Consulate's 10-state jurisdiction, but I currently live outside of the jurisdiction. Can I apply through Chicago but complete testing at a different Consulate?

Yes, you can apply through the Chicago Consulate and request to complete testing at a different Consulate. Please contact the Chicago Consulate to arrange this.

7.) What is the application timeline?

Applications will be posted on our MEXT Scholarship website in April; applications are due **Friday, May 23, 2025**. Those selected to have an interview may need to attend in-person testing at the Consulate on **June 18, 2025**. 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 in January or February 2026. Scholarship recipients will then depart for Japan in April 2026 or September/October 2026 (departure date is determined by the university you will attend).

8.) 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 (i.e. summer breaks) in the academic year. See the example chart at the end of this document.

9.) 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 an abstract of a major paper or project you have completed that relates to your intended field of study in Japan. Please review #8 of the application documents (pg 6) on the [guidelines](#) for more details.

10.) 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 in which you will be able to study and take graduate-level courses in, at a Japanese university.

11.) How detailed should I make my Field of Study & 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.

12.) Is it required to obtain a degree while on the MEXT Research Scholarship?

Yes. Prior to 2024, applicants could elect to do pure research without being required to seek a degree. But now, anyone applying should be targeting a Master's or PhD eventually on the scholarship. "Those who have no intention of obtaining a degree in Japan [are not eligible]." Please see 3. Qualification and Condition, section 8, bullet 11, on the [Guidelines](#) for more information.

13.) 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.

14.) 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/researchers>) which lists researchers in Japan by name, field university and location. You can also look at the Programs for Leading Graduate Schools (<https://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). [Japan Student Services Organization \(JASSO\)](#) and [Japan Study Support](#) are also good resources.

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

You can apply for the MEXT Scholarship from abroad. However, keep in mind that those who select “Japanese” or “Japanese or English” for question 23 on the application form must take the Japanese language exam in-person at the Chicago Consulate office.

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

The interviews and exams are normally held in-person at the Chicago Consulate office. Exams **must** be taken in-person on the assigned day for all US Consulates, no exceptions. It is possible for interviews to be online depending on the situation.

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

Research applicants will need to take a Japanese language exam if their field of study requires Japanese language proficiency. Those who select “English” for question 23 on the application form will not take any exams. Those who select “Japanese” or “Japanese or English” will be required to take the Japanese language exam.

18.) 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 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 Japanese language and Japanese culture.

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

Your university in Japan will decide if they want you to take the Japanese language course before beginning your research term.

20.) 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.

21.) 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.

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

Please see 9. Application Documents on the [Guidelines](#) 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. Please follow the guidelines posted on the [State Department website](#) when taking your photo. We also need 1 photocopy of each original document submitted.

23.) 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. For those that want to submit their applications online including the letter of recommendation, please direct your recommender to scan the signed letter on letterhead (or Letter of Recommendation Form) and email it to jic@cg.mofa.go.jp and cc megan.luedtke@cg.mofa.go.jp

24.) My Letter of Recommendation and/or transcripts came sealed.

Should I open them to make the required copies?

Please leave any sealed documents unopened and mail them to us as is. We can open them and make the copies needed for your application for you here at our office.

25.) The application requests originals and copies, but what constitutes an “original” version of my degree?

There are a few ways you can obtain an official version.

1. Have your registrar’s office sign a photocopy of your degree. We prefer the photocopy be in color.
2. You can request a copy of your degree from you registrar’s office directly. This option comes with a cost and usually takes 6-8 business days.
3. You can get a digital degree via a certified platform, such as Accredible, and send us the email link. Please keep in mind that documents from these platforms may be password protected so we may be unable to print them. If that is the case, we will reach out and request that you use a different method to obtain your “official” degree.

26.) 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

*It is strongly recommended that you mail your application in, however you may also email a scanned version of the application and documents to jic@cg.mofa.go.jp and cc megan.luedtke@cg.mofa.go.jp If you choose to email your application, please keep in mind that this email cannot accept attachments over 10MB. **Should you pass the first screening, you must bring the original physical application to the interview.**

For more information, please see the Guidelines posted on our website. If you have further questions, please contact MEXT Scholarship Coordinator Megan Luedtke at megan.luedtke@cg.mofa.go.jp or (312) 280-0434.

Sample Chart for Academic Background (below):

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)	From 9/1991 (入学) To 12/1992 (卒業)	1 year (年) and 4 months (月)	Grades 6-8
	Apex Middle School Name (学校名) Chicago, IL Location (所在地)	From 1/1993 (入学) To 8/1994 (卒業)	1 year (年) and 8 months (月)	
High School (高校)	Pearsonstown 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)	