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 2022 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, 1988 (c) Have a bachelor’s degree by April or September, 2023 (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: https://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 April; applications are due Thursday, June 16, 2022. Those selected to have an interview will have their interview in-person on Friday, July 1, 2022 (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 in January or February 2023. Scholarship recipients will then depart for Japan in April 2023 or September/October 2023 (departure date is determined by the university you will attend).

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 no write a senior thesis. Instead, we ask that you submit a copy of a major paper or project you have completed that relates to you 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 in 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 Guidelines #3 for more information.

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 Programs for Leading Graduate Schools (https://www.jsps.go.jp/-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. However, keep in mind that this year the exam and interview will take place in-person at the Chicago Consulate office.

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

No, the interview and exams will only be held in-person this year at the Chicago Consulate office. The exams are scheduled for Thursday, June 30, 2022 and the interviews are scheduled for the following day, Friday, July 1, 2022 (tentative).

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

Research applicants take Japanese language and English language exams.

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 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 decided 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 Ms. Julianne Medrano at julianne.medrano@cg.mofa.go.jp or (312) 280-0434.

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.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Name and Address of School</th>
<th>Year and Month of Entrance and Completion</th>
<th>Duration of Attendances</th>
<th>Diploma or Degree awarded, Major subject, Skipper years/levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Education</td>
<td>Githens Elementary School</td>
<td>From 9/1986 (入学) to 8/1991 (卒業)</td>
<td>5 years (年) and months (月)</td>
<td>Grades 1-5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>New York City, NY Location</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Education</td>
<td>Southwest Middle School</td>
<td>From 9/1991 (入学) to 12/1992 (卒業)</td>
<td>1 year (年) and 4 months (月)</td>
<td>Grades 6-8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>New York, NY Location</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apex Middle School</td>
<td>From 1/1993 (入学) to 8/1994 (卒業)</td>
<td>1 year (年) and 8 months (月)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chicago, IL Location</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Pearsontown High School</td>
<td>From 9/1994 (入学) to 6/1998 (卒業)</td>
<td>4 years (年) and months (月)</td>
<td>Grades 9-12; High School Diploma</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chicago, IL Location</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertiary Education</td>
<td>University of Illinois</td>
<td>From 9/1998 (入学) to 5/2002 (卒業)</td>
<td>4 years (年) and months (月)</td>
<td>Bachelor of Arts</td>
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<td>Undergraduate</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Location</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Level</td>
<td>University of Chicago</td>
<td>From 9/2003 (入学) to 6/2005 (卒業)</td>
<td>2 years (年) and months (月)</td>
<td>Master of Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chicago, IL Location</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 0 months (年) (月)