

Department of Astronomical Science, School of Physical Sciences  
The Graduate University for Advanced Studies, SOKENDAI  
Application Guidelines October 2022 (SOKENDAI Recommendation)  
(Monbukagakusho: MEXT Scholarship Student)

## 1. General Prospectus

The Graduate University for Advanced Studies, SOKENDAI was founded on October 1, 1988 as one of the national universities of Japan. The basic idea of SOKENDAI is to develop a new system of postgraduate education in Japan. Its key features are as follows;

- 1) SOKENDAI offers both three-year and five-year doctoral programs.
- 2) SOKENDAI consists of six schools with 20 departments operated by 17 Inter-University Research Institutes and Independent Administrative Institutions (“parent institutions”).
- 3) Research and education are carried out in close cooperation with the parent institutions.
- 4) Broad and international visions are fostered by enhanced interchange among all departments and other universities in Japan and abroad.

The parent institutions provide Japanese and foreign scientists with opportunities to conduct advanced joint research in various branches of science. They are equipped with extensive research facilities and function as centers for advanced studies. At present, they are cooperating in establishing a world-class program of postgraduate education in SOKENDAI.

## 2. Department Outlines

The Department of Astronomical Science, School of Physical Sciences, SOKENDAI, is a graduate school based at the National Astronomical Observatory of Japan, a member institute of the National Institutes of Natural Sciences. The goal of the department is to train researchers capable of doing cutting-edge research, to train specialists capable of developing advanced technologies, and to develop human resources with the highly-specialized knowledge needed to work in the scientific field. To this end, graduate students conduct observational and theoretical research and research on the development of new instruments related to astronomical science in an environment equipped with state-of-the-art observational instruments and supercomputers.

Webpage: <https://www.guas-astronomy.jp/eng/Intro/outline.html>

## 3. Doctoral Degree Requirements

A Doctor of Philosophy degree shall be conferred on students who have satisfied the requirements of their respective programs as prescribed below.

[Three-year doctoral program]

Students must be enrolled in SOKENDAI for at least three years in principle; additionally, they must earn the necessary credits, receive necessary research guidance, and pass the examination for a doctoral thesis. Students who are recognized as having achieved significant progress may be able to graduate in a shorter time frame.

[Five-year doctoral program]

Students must be enrolled in SOKENDAI for at least five years in principle; additionally, they must earn the necessary credits, receive necessary research guidance, and pass the examination for a doctoral thesis. Students who are recognized as having achieved significant progress may be able to graduate in a shorter time frame.

#### 4. Qualifications for Application

[Qualifications for the three-year doctoral program]

Applicants must fulfill one of the following conditions;

- 1) Applicants on whom a Master's degree or a degree equivalent to a professional degree has been conferred or is expected to be conferred in a foreign country by the month preceding enrollment;
- 2) Applicants who hold or are expected to obtain a Master's degree or a professional degree by the month preceding enrollment in Japan;
- 3) Applicants who have been recognized by SOKENDAI as having academic ability equivalent to or superior to those who have a Master's degree or a professional degree by the individual screening of the Admission Qualifications of SOKENDAI, and have attained the age of 24 years by the end of the month preceding enrollment. (Note)

Notes:

\*The qualifications concern not the date of completion of the master's course of study, but the date of conferral of a master's or equivalent professional degree.

\*Applicants who intend to apply under the provision 3) above are required to have a qualification screening to confirm "having academic ability equivalent to those who have a Master's degree or a professional degree" before the application can be submitted. If applicable, please contact the Student Affairs Section by email in advance.

\*Those who have completed or are expected to complete a master's course before the time of enrollment in the program, but are not expected to be granted a master's or professional degree

by that time must take extra screening procedures before the application.

\*Other than the above qualifications 1) to 3), eligible applicants include those who otherwise satisfy or will satisfy the qualification requirements for general admission to SOKENDAI. If the applicant has any questions regarding the qualifications for admission, please contact the Student Affairs Section in advance.

[Qualifications for the five-year doctoral program]

Applicants must fulfill one of the following conditions;

- 1) Applicants who have completed or are expected to complete a 16-year course of school education in a foreign country by the month preceding enrollment;
- 2) Applicants who have graduated or are expected to graduate from a Japanese university specified in Article 83 of the School Education Law by the month preceding enrollment;
- 3) Applicants who have been conferred or are expected to be conferred a degree equivalent to a Bachelor's degree by the month preceding enrollment by completing an educational course of three or more years in a foreign university or in a foreign educational institute;
- 4) Applicants who have completed a 15-year course of school education in a foreign country by the end of the month preceding enrollment; (Note)
- 5) Applicants who have been recognized as having academic ability equivalent to a university graduate or higher by the individual screening of Admission Qualifications of SOKENDAI, and have attained the age of 22 years by the end of the month preceding enrollment. (Note)

Notes:

Applicants who intend to apply under the provisions (4) or (5) are required to have qualification screening before the application can be submitted. If applicable, please contact the Student Affairs Section by email in advance.

\*Other than above the qualifications 1) to 5), eligible applicants include those who otherwise satisfy or will satisfy the qualification requirements for general admission to SOKENDAI. If the applicant has any questions regarding the qualifications for admission, please contact the Student Affairs Section in advance.

## 5. Application Procedures

[Application Period]

October 4 to November 3 2021\*

\*The application must arrive no later than the last day of the application period without fail.

[Contact the prospective supervisor]

Before applying, the applicant must contact the prospective supervisor and confirm whether he/she can accept the applicant if the applicant passes the examination

[Application Method]

The applicant must submit the complete set of application documents either mail or email. For the details, please confirm following 1) and 2). The application must reach SOKENDAI no later than the application deadline, November 3 2021 5:00pm JST.

1) mail

The complete set of application documents must be submitted by registered express mail or a similar service. If there are any problems in submitted documents, SOKENDAI will contact the applicant via email.

Mailing address;

Student Affairs Section, Division of Academic and Student Affairs  
The Graduate University for Advanced Studies, SOKENDAI  
Shonan Village, Hayama, Miura, Kanagawa 240-0193 JAPAN  
Telephone number +81-46-858-1526

2) email

The complete set of application documents must be submitted by email. If the applicant attached files contain more than 5 megabytes, please send them separately and number each email subject. Also, when sending files, please attach them to email directly, not using the uploaders. After receiving the applicant's email, SOKENDAI will send the applicant a confirmation email. If the applicant does not receive our email within a week after submitting documents, please contact us.

Email address: [gakusei@ml.soken.ac.jp](mailto:gakusei@ml.soken.ac.jp) (Student Affairs Section, SOKENDAI)

Notes: If the applicant will be accepted enrollment, the applicant must submit the original of official transcript and certification of graduation.

## 6. Selection Schedule and Method

We will carry out the selection by two steps. The first step is paper screening and the second step is interview. Only the applicants who passed the paper screening can proceed to the interview.

[Five-year doctoral program]

(1) Paper screening

We will review English score record (TOEFL iBT or IELTS), GRE Subject Test (Physics) Score

Record and other application forms carefully and decide whether the applicant can proceed to the interview or not. We will notify the result of the paper screening to the applicants via e-mail by two weeks before the interview day.

(2) Interview

We will ask applicants of their past study, research plans and other general matters. The interview will be held on December 3, 2021.

[Three-year doctoral program]

(1) Paper screening

We will review English score record (TOEFL iBT or IELTS) and other application forms carefully and decide whether the applicant can proceed to the interview or not. We will notify the result of the paper screening to the applicants via e-mail by two weeks before the interview day.

(2) Interview

Applicants are asked to have a presentation on their past study first. Then an oral examination follows. At the oral examination, applicants are provided with a text about basic physics and astronomy in English and to answer questions based on it. Following that, interview is carried out to review the applicant's research plans and other general matters. The interview will be held on December 3, 2021.

## 7. Announcement of Result

Preliminary admission and scholarship announcements will be sent in April 2022.

Final announcements will be sent by July 2022.

## 8. Contact details for inquiries

Student Affairs Section, Division of Academic and Student Affairs

The Graduate University for Advanced Studies, SOKENDAI

E-mail: [gakusei@ml.soken.ac.jp](mailto:gakusei@ml.soken.ac.jp)

## Application Guidelines for Japanese Government (Monbukagakusho: MEXT) Foreign Research Student Scholarship 2022 (SOKENDAI Recommendation)

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) offers a Japanese government scholarship to foreign students who wish to study at the Department of Astronomical Science, SOKENDAI by its recommendation as follows.

### 1. Qualifications and conditions

#### 1) Applicants:

The scholarship is offered to new foreign students who have earned the equivalent level of a graduate with outstanding academic performance. The applicant must have a minimum GPA 2.3 or higher and are expected to maintain the equivalent level during the scholarship period.

#### 2) Nationality:

The applicant must hold a nationality of a country that is specified by MEXT. The applicant who holds Japanese citizenship or a nationality of a country that is not specified by MEXT at the time of application is not eligible.

To see the list of specified nationalities, please confirm following webpage.

[https://www.soken.ac.jp/cms\\_upload/specified\\_nationalities.pdf](https://www.soken.ac.jp/cms_upload/specified_nationalities.pdf)

#### 3) Age:

The applicant must have been born on or after April 2, 1987.

#### 4) Academic Background:

The applicant for the five-year doctoral program must have completed a 16-year course of study in the educational institutions of a foreign country or is expected to complete such course of study by September 30, 2022.

The applicant for the three-year doctoral program must have been granted or be expected to be granted a Master's degree or a professional degree by September 30, 2022.

For the details, please see "4. Qualifications for Application" in the application guidelines above.

#### 5) Study Area:

The study area must be in the same field as the applicant has studied or in a related one.

The field of study must be one available at SOKENDAI.

#### 6) Language ability:

The applicant must fulfill at least one of the requirements listed below.

- a) Holds an English proficiency test score equivalent to B2 or above on the CEFR

(Common European Framework of Reference for Languages).

To see the CEFR Equivalency Chart, please confirm following webpage.

[https://www.soken.ac.jp/cms\\_upload/CEFR.pdf](https://www.soken.ac.jp/cms_upload/CEFR.pdf)

- b) Has completed an educational program whose primary language of instruction is English that satisfies the entrance requirements to the Five-year doctoral program or Three-year doctoral program at SOKENDAI

7) Health:

The applicant must be physically and mentally healthy enough to take graduate studies at a university in Japan.

8) Arrival in Japan:

The applicant must be able to arrive in Japan on the dates designated by SOKENDAI in the period between the middle of September and the beginning of October, 2022 (the applicant who cannot arrive in Japan within the designated period should decline acceptance. Those who arrive in Japan before the designated date for personal reasons will NOT be provided traveling expenses to Japan).

9) Visa Requirement:

If selected, the applicant will be required to acquire a “Student (ryugaku)” visa in the home country prior to coming to Japan and enter Japan with “Student” status. Therefore, the successful applicant who is already in Japan under a different residence status must change his/her residence status to “Student” by the end of September, 2022 and re-enter Japan with “Student” status. (The applicant who comes to Japan with a visa or residence status other than “Student” will NOT qualify for the Japanese government scholarship. Also, please note that the applicant who changes his/her residence status to any status other than “Student” after entry into Japan will lose his/her status as a Japanese government scholarship student.) Please be informed that there is a possibility that applicant’s application for the original residence status may not be approved after the period of MEXT scholarship student.

10) Others:

The student under the conditions stated below will NOT be considered as a candidate.

- a) Military personnel and military civilian employees registered on the active list;
- b) The applicant who is not able to arrive in Japan on the appointed dates;
- c) The applicant who has received the MEXT scholarship within the past three years (However; this restriction does not apply to those who have been enrolled as a scholarship student in a Japanese language and culture program or as a scholarship student in the Japan-Korea Joint Undergraduate Course for Science and Engineering).

- d) The applicant who applies for another MEXT scholarship.
- e) The applicant who has enrolled in a Japanese university with “Student (ryugaku)” status at the time of the application and has enrolled/will be enrolled in a Japanese university as a privately-financed foreign student between the time of application and the beginning of the scholarship payment. If the applicant who has enrolled/will be enrolled in a Japanese university as a privately-financed foreign student surely know at the time of the application that he/she will return to his/her home country before the scholarship period starts and will acquire a “Student” visa and enter Japan with the visa, the preceding paragraph shall not apply to the applicant.
- f) The applicant who has already won a scholarship from another institution (including the government of their home country) other than MEXT.

## 2. Term of Scholarship

- 1) Three-year doctoral program

The scholarship will be payable for three years (standard program term) (starting October 2022 and finishing September 2025.)

- 2) Five-year doctoral program

The scholarship will be payable for two years (the first two years of the standard program term) (starting October 2022 and finishing September 2024). For the grantee to extend his/her scholarship till the end of the standard program term (till September 2027), he/she should make an application for the extension of the scholarship which must be approved by MEXT. Please note that depending on his/her academic achievement and the budget condition of MEXT, his/her application will not necessarily be approved.

## 3. Scholarship Benefits

- 1) Scholarship amount:

The scholarship amount for 2022 has not been fixed yet.

For reference, the scholarship amount for 2021 is as follows.

Enrolled Program	Amount of Stipend per month
1 and 2-year student of five-year doctoral program	147,000 yen*
3 to 5-year student of five-year doctoral program, 1 to 3-year student of three-year doctoral program	148,000yen*

\*In case the grantee’s principal place of research is Mitaka campus. The amount may differ depending on the grantee’s principal place of research.

The amount for 2022 may change depending on the budget conditions.

The scholarship will NOT be paid to the grantee who takes a leave of absence from the university or does not attend classes for an extended period of time.

2) Transportation to Japan:

According to his/her itinerary and route as designated by MEXT, the grantee will be provided an economy class air ticket from the international airport nearest to his/her home address to Narita airport, or the international airport in Japan nearest to the campus of SOKENDAI where the grantee is placed. Other expenses such as inland transportation from his/her place of residence to the international airport, airport tax, and any special taxes on overseas travel, will NOT be provided. (The address stated in the application is considered as "home address of the grantee".)

\*No air tickets will be issued to the grantee for a route from any countries other than the country of his/her nationality.

3) Transportation from Japan:

For the grantee who returns to his/her home country by a specified date after the period of his/her scholarship has ended, MEXT will pay for an economy class air ticket from Narita airport or the international airport in Japan nearest to the campus of SOKENDAI where the grantee is placed to the international airport nearest to his/her home address.

\* The grantee should purchase air travel insurance at his/her own expense.

\* The airports for departure and return should be in the country of the grantee's nationality.

4) Education fee:

Fee for the matriculation and tuition at SOKENDAI will be paid by MEXT.

#### 4. Recommendation and Selection

1) Scholarship Recommendation:

After screening at SOKENDAI, the President of SOKENDAI, recommends to MEXT applicants who have shown academic excellence.

2) Scholarship Selection:

Candidates are screened and selected by the selection committee from a pool of applicants recommended by presidents of all universities in Japan. Based on the results of screening and selection by the committee, MEXT selects grantees and their terms of scholarship.

3) Documents to be submitted:

- a) Application Form (Attached)
- b) Field of study and Research Plan (Attached)

- c) Photograph or digital image sized 4.5 cm x 3.5 cm taken within the past six months (Full-faced photograph. When photographed, the applicant must not wear a hat or cap hiding a part of his/her face or head. The applicant must write his/her name and nationality on the back of the photograph.)
- d) Proof of nationality (A copy of the applicant's passport is most preferable.)
- e) Certified academic records (originals or certified copies)

The applicant must submit certified academic records of each academic year of all universities attended (issued by the university attended.)

- Applicants who apply for the three-year doctoral program must submit the Official Transcript of all academic year from both undergraduate and graduate schools.
- Applicants who apply for the five-year doctoral program must submit the Official Transcript of all academic year from the undergraduate school. If applicants who have master's or doctor's degree must submit the Official Transcript from graduate schools
- f) Diplomas or degree certificates (originals or certified copies)

The applicant must submit a diploma or degree certificates of all universities attended (or a document certifying that the applicant will graduate from the university by September 2022.)

- Applicants who apply for the three-year doctoral program must submit the Certificate of Graduation both undergraduate and graduate schools.
- Applicants who apply for the five-year doctoral program must submit the Certificate of Graduation from the undergraduate school. If applicants who graduated graduate schools must submit the Certificate of Graduation from graduate schools.
- Applicants who have not yet graduated from a university must submit an attested document certifying that the applicant will graduate from the university before entering the doctoral program.
- g) Proof of the applicant's academic level, such as the academic ranking in his/her previous university (e.g., GPA, ABC grading, ranking of academic achievement.)
- h) Dean's recommendation letter from the home institution, addressed to the President of SOKENDAI (original)
- i) Abstract of thesis  
If applicant has no thesis or publications, please submit a summary of his/her current research project.
- j) Certificate of English proficiency  
The applicant must submit a certificate of English in either way shown below..
  - i. Official score report, such as TOEFL iBT, IELTS, TOEIC L&R and S&W, proving that the applicant has English proficiency equivalent to CEFR (Common

European Framework of Reference for Languages) B2 level or above. Please note that the applicant must have been taken one of the above tests after January 1, 2020

- ii. Document to certify that the applicant has completed a bachelor's course (for the Five-year doctoral program) or a master's course (for the Three-year doctoral program) in English as main language.

[How to submit score record]

- i. TOEFL iBT

Please submit the original of official score report by one of the following methods.

- Applicants submit the original of official score report by mail with application documents
- Applicants submit a copy of official score report with application documents and make arrangement ETS to send the original of official score report to SOKENDAI directly.

The Institution Code and Institution Name is as follow.

Institution Code: 7564

Institution Name: SOKENDAI (The Graduate University for Advanced Studies)

The score must be submitted us by application period. Please note that will it take for six weeks or more to receive the score since applicants ask ETS to send it.

- ii. IELTS

Please submit a copy of official score report with application documents.

- iii. TOEIC L&R and S&W

Please submit the original of official score report with application documents by mail.

If applicants who cannot submit any of the above scores by application period, please contact the Student Affairs Section of SOKENDAI

- k) GRE Subject Test (Physics) Score Report (five-year doctoral program only)

- Note that the minimum GRE Subject Test (Physics) score in the paper screening is 700.
- Applicants are strongly recommended to take GRE Subject Test (Physics) before September 11. The applicants who will take the GRE test on October 23, 2021, must follow the directions below; (i) include a copy of registration confirmation e-mail from ETS to the application documents, (ii) send a screenshot of online record to the Graduate Student Affairs Unit in NAOJ (daigakuin@nao.ac.jp) by e-mail, on or before November 22, 2021 and (iii) arrange the official records to be sent to SOKENDAI.
- Applicants who are unable to take GRE Subject test (physics) due to the effect of

covid-19 must contact the Graduate Student Affairs Unit in NAOJ before the application period starts.

- l) Proof of the applicant's specific knowledge and capability in his/her field, such as a commendation for research achievement (optional)

## 5. Additional considerations

- 1) The documents above must be prepared in Japanese or English. If the documents are prepared in languages other than Japanese or English, the official English translation must be attached.
- 2) The documents above must be prepared using word-processing software. Print all required documents on A4 size paper. (if possible)
- 3) Admission may be withdrawn at any time even after enrollment if the application documents are found to be invalid or contain false information.

## 6. Notes

- 1) The recipient of the MEXT scholarship may have his/her scholarship revoked in the following cases. In case the recipient wrongly receives the scholarship under the following circumstances, he/she may be required to return the scholarship for the period.
  - a) When the recipient has made false statements on the application;
  - b) When the recipient violates his/her contractual agreement with MEXT;
  - c) When the recipient has been the subject of disciplinary action at SOKENDAI;
  - d) When it becomes definitive that the recipient will not be able to graduate (or complete the program) within the standard program term because of his/her poor academic achievement or suspension;
  - e) When the recipient changes his/her "Student" visa status to some other status of residence;
  - f) When the recipient receives other scholarships (excluding grants for specific research projects);
  - g) When the recipient proceeds to a higher course without approval for the extension of the scholarship by MEXT;
  - h) When the recipient withdraws from SOKENDAI or transfers to a different graduate school.
- 2) If the recipient takes a leave of absence from SOKENDAI or does not attend classes for an extended period of time, he/she will NOT receive scholarship payments during

the period.

- 3) Security Export Control: Depending on the specifics of the education and research instructions they wish to receive upon entering the program, applicants may be subject to regulations on the export/transfer of controlled technologies based on the Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Law. Please consult the Student Affairs Section for further details.