

Graduate Institute for Advanced Studies, SOKENDAI
Application Guidelines for
MEXT Scholarship Student (SOKENDAI Recommendation)
October 2027
[Astronomical Science Program]

Application Guidelines For SOKENDAI (MEXT Scholarship Student)

1. General Prospectus	1
2. Astronomical Science Program Outline	1
3. Doctoral Degree Requirements	2
4. Qualifications for Application	2
5. Application Procedure	3
6. Selection Schedule and Method	4
7. Announcement of Result	5
8. Security Export Control	5
9. Privacy Policy	5

Application Guidelines for MEXT Scholarship Student

1. Qualifications and Conditions	6
2. Terms of Scholarship	8
3. Scholarship Benefits	8
4. Recommendation and Selection	9
5. Application Documents	9
6. Additional considerations	11
7. Notes	12

< Contact Details for Inquiries >

Student Affairs Section, Division of Academic and Student Affairs

The Graduate University for Advanced Studies, SOKENDAI

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Regarding the Use of Generative AI in the Entrance Exam Process (Important Notes)

Information on the use of generative AI in the entrance examination process (Important Notes) is available on our university website. When preparing your application, please review this information as well.

https://www.soken.ac.jp/en/admission/file/use_ai_entranceexam_en20251117.pdf

Application Guidelines For SOKENDAI (MEXT Scholarship Student)

1. General Prospectus

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

- 1) SOKENDAI offers both three-year and five-year doctoral programs.
- 2) SOKENDAI consists of 20 programs under one institute operated by 20 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 between various institutions and universities in Japan and abroad.

The parent institutions provide Japanese and foreign scientists with opportunities to conduct advanced joint research in various scientific branches. They are equipped with extensive research facilities and function as centers for advanced studies. Presently, they cooperate to establish a world-class program for postgraduate education at SOKENDAI.

[Admission Policy]

<What SOKENDAI expects of our grad students>

SOKENDAI tends to attract students who have a strong interest in research, who constantly hone their abundant intellect and sensitivity with the aim of conducting research in the new era, while taking a “bird's-eye view” of the entire field of study, and who have the will and enthusiasm to be active on the international stage.

<Basic policy for the selection of our grad students>

In selecting students for admission, SOKENDAI places importance on basic academic ability and logical thinking ability to actively promote research in the cutting-edge 20 research institutes affiliated with SOKENDAI. In order to properly judge such abilities, various selections will be made according to the respective fields of specialization.

2. Astronomical Science Program Outline

Astronomical Science Program offers advanced education and research through a wide range of observational and theoretical studies with state-of-the-art optical-infrared and radio telescopes. More specifically, this program covers development and application of advanced new technologies fundamental to astronomical observation, design, fabrication, and experimentation of new observational instruments, development of data acquisition and analysis methods, and development of technologies

ranging from basic to advanced observational astronomy, as well as observational research using these technologies and theoretical research using supercomputers.

Webpage: <https://guas-astronomy.jp/eng/index.html>

3. Doctoral Degree Requirements

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

[Three-year doctoral program]

Students must be enrolled in SOKENDAI for at least three years, earn the necessary credits, receive the 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 timeframe.

[Five-year doctoral program]

Students must be enrolled in SOKENDAI for at least five years, earn the necessary credits, receive the 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 timeframe.

4. Qualifications for Application

[Qualifications for the three-year doctoral program]

Applicants must fulfill one of the following conditions:

- 1) 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) Hold or are expected to obtain a master's degree or a professional degree in Japan by the month preceding enrollment
- 3) 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 an age of 24 years by the end of the month preceding enrollment

Note 1: The qualifications do not concern the date of completion of the master's course of study, but the date of conferral of a master's or equivalent professional degree.

Note 2: Applicants who intend to apply under Provision 3) above are required to undergo 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 via email in advance.

Note 3: Those who have completed or are expected to complete a master's course before the time of enrollment in the doctoral program, but are not expected to be granted a master's or professional degree by that time must undergo extra screening procedures before the application.

Note 4: Besides 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 you have 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) Have completed or are expected to complete a 16-year course of school education in a foreign country by the month preceding enrollment
- 2) Have graduated or are expected to graduate from a Japanese university as specified in Article 83 of the School Education Law by the month preceding enrollment
- 3) 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 at a foreign university or a foreign educational institute
- 4) Have completed a 15-year course of school education in a foreign country by the end of the month preceding enrollment
- 5) 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 an age of 22 years by the end of the month preceding enrollment

Note 5: Applicants who intend to apply under Provisions 4) or 5) are required to undergo qualification screening before the application can be submitted. If applicable, please contact the Student Affairs Section via email in advance.

Note 6: Besides the above qualifications 1) – 5), eligible applicants include those who otherwise satisfy or will satisfy the qualification requirements for general admission to SOKENDAI. If you have any questions regarding the qualifications for admission, please contact the Student Affairs Section in advance.

Note 7: If the applicant is accepted for enrollment, the applicant must submit the original official transcript and certification of graduation.

5. Application Procedure

[Application Period]

From October 7 to November 5, 2026, 5:00 pm JST*

*The application must arrive no later than the last day of the application period, without failure.

[Contact the prospective supervisor]

Before applying, the applicant must contact the prospective supervisor to confirm whether the supervisor will accept the applicant if the applicant passes the examination.

[Application Method]

The applicant must submit a complete set of application documents either by mail or email. For details, please confirm the following points (1) and (2). The application must reach SOKENDAI no later than the application deadline of November 5, 2026 at 5:00 pm 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 with the 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 via email. If the attached files exceed 10 megabytes, please send them separately and number each email subject. Additionally, when sending files, please attach them directly to your email rather than using uploaders. After receiving the applicant's email, SOKENDAI will send a confirmation email. If the applicant does not receive our email within a week of submitting the documents, please contact us.

Email address:

gakusei@ml.soken.ac.jp (Student Affairs Section, SOKENDAI)

6. Selection Schedule and Method

We will carry out the selection in 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. 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 about their past studies, research plans, and other general matters. The interview will be held on December 4, 2026.

[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. 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 first provided with a text about basic physics and mathematics in English. Then they are asked to answer questions related to the content of the text. Following that, interview is carried out to review the applicant's research plans and other general matters. The interview will be held on December 4, 2026.

7. Announcement of Result

- Preliminary admission and scholarship announcements will be sent in April 2027.
- Final announcements will be sent by July 2027.

8. Security Export Control

Based on the Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Act (*), SOKENDAI has established regulations and conducts examinations for the provision of technology and the acceptance of researchers and students. For this reason, if it is determined that your intended education or research activities fall under, or are likely to fall under, the regulations, you may be asked to modify your proposed education or research content. Additionally, admission may not be granted, regardless of the entrance examination results. Please consult the program office for further details.

* <https://www.meti.go.jp/policy/anpo/englishpage.html>

9. Privacy Policy

(1) Any personal information, including the applicant's name and address, submitted to SOKENDAI as part of the application documents shall be used during the application process, such as applicant/examination procedures, notification of results, and admission procedures. After enrollment, personal information shall also be used for student affairs (school register and course registration), student services (health care, tuition exemption and scholarship application, and career support), and administrative purposes of processing payments for entrance and tuition fees.

(2) Personal information obtained in the screening process, such as examination results, shall be used for aggregate analyses of examination results and research for use in the screening process.

Application Guidelines for MEXT Scholarship Student

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) offers the following Japanese government scholarship to foreign students who wish to study at SOKENDAI.

1. Qualifications and Conditions

1) Applicants

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

2) Nationality

The applicant must hold the nationality of a country with diplomatic relations with the Japanese government. The applicant who holds Japanese citizenship at the time of application is not eligible.

The applicant must hold the nationality of a country specified by MEXT. An applicant who holds Japanese citizenship or the nationality of a country not specified by MEXT at the time of application is not eligible. To see the list of specified nationalities, please confirm the following webpage.

https://www.soken.ac.jp/en/admission/file/List_of_Specified_Nationalities.pdf

3) Age

The applicant must have been born on or after April 2, 1992.

4) Academic Background

For the three-year doctoral program, the applicant must have been awarded, or be expected to be awarded, a master's or professional degree by September 30, 2027.

For the five-year doctoral program, the applicant must have completed a 16-year course of study at an educational institution in a foreign country or be expected to complete such a course by September 30, 2027.

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

5) Study Area

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

<https://www.soken.ac.jp/en/admission/file/CEFRquivalencyChart.pdf>

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

7) Health

The applicant must be physically and mentally healthy enough to pursue 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 between mid-September and the beginning of October 2027 (applicants 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 with travel expenses to Japan.

9) Visa Requirement

If selected, the applicant will be required to obtain a “Student (ryugaku)” visa in the home country prior to entering Japan and to 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 2027 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. Additionally, 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 your application for the original residence status may not be approved after the period of the MEXT scholarship.

10) Others

The applicant will NOT be considered a candidate under the conditions stated below:

- (a) Military personnel and military civilian employees registered on the active list.
- (b) Is not able to arrive in Japan on the appointed dates
- (c) Has received the MEXT scholarship within the past three years. However, this restriction does not apply to the following:
 - (1) Those who have been enrolled as scholarship students in a Japanese language and culture program or as a scholarship student in the Japan-Korea Joint Undergraduate Course for Science and Engineering
 - (2) Those who have obtained or are expected to obtain a degree as undergraduate students of the Japanese Government (MEXT) Scholarship programs (university recommendation/special selection)
- (d) Has applied for another MEXT scholarship
- (e) 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

(f) Has already won a scholarship that is prohibited from receiving, along with the MEXT scholarship, such as JSPS DC Research Fellowships

2. Terms of Scholarship

1) Three-year doctoral program

If the grantee enrolls directly in the three-year doctoral program after coming to Japan, the scholarship will be payable for three years (the standard program term), from October 2027 to September 2030.

2) Five-year doctoral program

Because MEXT scholarship students are classified as either “Master’s Program” or “Doctoral Program,” even if a student enrolls in the five-year doctoral program, the initial scholarship period will cover only the first two years of the standard program term (from October 2027 to September 2029).

To extend the scholarship period to the end of the standard program term (September 2032), the grantee must apply for a scholarship extension and obtain MEXT’s approval. Please note that approval is not guaranteed and depends on the student’s academic performance and MEXT’s budgetary conditions.

3. Scholarship Benefits

1) Scholarship amount

The scholarship amount for 2027 has not been fixed yet.

For reference, the scholarship amount for 2026 is as follows.

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

* 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 2027 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.

2) Transportation to Japan

According to his/her itinerary and route as designated by MEXT, the grantee will be provided with an economy-class air ticket from the international airport nearest to his/her home address to Narita/Haneda 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 a grantee for a route from any country other than the country of his/her nationality.

3) Transportation from Japan

For a grantee who returns to his/her home country by a specified date after the scholarship has ended, MEXT will pay for an economy class air ticket from Narita/Haneda 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

The admission and tuition fees at SOKENDAI will be paid by MEXT.

4. Recommendation and Selection

1) Scholarship Recommendation

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

2) Scholarship Selection

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

5. Application Documents

Please read “Application checklist” on our website.

a-1) Application Form 1 (attached): MEXT Format

a-2) Application Form 2 (attached): SOKENDAI Format

b) Field of study and Research Plan (attached)

c) Photograph or digital image

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 that covers any 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 (preferably a copy of the applicant's passport).

e) Certified academic records (originals or certified copies)

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

- Applicants applying for the three-year doctoral program must submit Official Transcripts for all academic years from both undergraduate and graduate schools.
- Applicants applying for the five-year doctoral program must submit Official Transcripts for all academic years from undergraduate school. Applicants who have master's or doctoral degrees must submit Official Transcripts from graduate schools

f) Diploma or degree certificate (original or certified copies)

The applicants must submit a diploma or degree certificate from all the universities attended (or a document certifying that the applicants will graduate from the university by September 2027).

- Applicants applying for the three-year doctoral program must submit the Certificate of Graduation in both undergraduate and graduate schools.
- Applicants applying for the five-year doctoral program must submit the Certificate of Graduation from their undergraduate school. Applicants who graduated from graduate schools must submit their Certificates of Graduation.
- Applicants who have not yet graduated from a university must submit an attested document certifying that the applicants will graduate before entering the doctoral program.

g) Proof of the applicant's academic level in his/her previous university (e.g., grading scale, grading system).

h) A recommendation letter from the applicant's home institution, addressed to the President of SOKENDAI (original)

- A recommendation letter must be issued by the Dean or equivalent (or higher) of the applicant's current university or the most recent university the applicant attended if he/she is not currently enrolled in any university. SOKENDAI cannot accept a recommendation letter from the department head or academic supervisors.
- Please attach a document indicating the position of the person who wrote the recommendation letter.

i) Abstracts of thesis

If the applicant has no theses 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 one, as shown below.

- I. Official score report, such as TOEFL iBT, and IELTS, proving that applicants have English proficiency equivalent to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) B2 level or above. Please note that the applicant must have undergone one of these tests after January 1, 2025.
- II. Applicants for the five-year doctoral program: a document certifying that the applicant has completed his/her bachelor's course in English as the main language
- III. Applicants for the three-year doctoral program: a document certifying that the applicant has completed his/her master's course in English as the main language

[How to submit score record]

i. TOEFL iBT

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

- Applicants arrange for ETS to send the original official score report directly to SOKENDAI.

The Institution Code and Institution Name are as follows.

- ◆ Institution Code: 7564
- ◆ Institution Name: SOKENDAI (The Graduate University for Advanced Studies)

*Score reports from ETS may be sent either electronically or by paper. However, they must arrive at SOKENDAI by the application deadline.

If applicants submit the original official score report in paper form, they must mail it along with the other application documents.

ii. IELTS

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

- Applicants must submit a copy of the official score report with the application documents.

*The score will be verified through the IELTS Verification Service.

- Applicants arrange for the administering organization to send the original official score report directly to SOKENDAI.

The Institution Name is as follows:

Institution Name: The Graduate University for Advanced Studies, 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 the GRE Subject Test (Physics) on or before September 27, 2026, so that the official score report of the GRE Subject Test reaches SOKENDAI within the application period. Applicants taking the GRE Subject Test in the exam period of October 19-November 1 (inclusive) must follow the directions below: (i) include a copy of the registration confirmation email from ETS to the application documents, (ii) send a screenshot of the online record to the Graduate Student Affairs Unit in NAOJ (ken-daigakuin@dl.nao.ac.jp) by e-mail, on or before November 12, 2026, and (iii) arrange the official score reports to be sent to SOKENDAI.

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

6. Additional considerations

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

7. Notes

1) The recipients of the MEXT scholarship may have his/her scholarship revoked in the following cases:
If the recipient wrongly receives the scholarship under the following circumstances, he/she may be required to return the scholarship for that 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 terms because of 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 another scholarship (a scholarship or fellowship from the Japanese government, a Japanese government-related organization, or others) not approved for acceptance in conjunction with the MEXT Scholarship.
- 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, he/she will NOT receive scholarship payments during the period.