

Graduate Institute for Advanced Studies, SOKENDAI
Application Guidelines for
Special Admissions for Applicants Residing Abroad
(Privately Financed International Students)
Doctoral Program 2027
[Astronomical Science Program]

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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

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.

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. Doctoral Programs and Number of Students Accepted

Doctoral Programs	Number of Students Accepted	
	April 2027 admission	October 2027 admission
Three-year doctoral program	A few	A few
Five-year doctoral program	A few	A few

5. Qualifications for Application

[Qualifications for the three-year doctoral program]

Applicants must fulfill one of the following conditions:

- 1) Master's degree or a degree equivalent to a Professional degree has been conferred or is expected to be conferred by the month preceding enrollment.
- 2) 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 the above provision (2) 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.

Additionally, those who have completed or are expected to complete a master's course before the 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 applying. If applicable, please contact the Student Affairs Section via email before the application period.

Note 3: Besides the above qualifications (Qualifications 1 and 2), 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 in 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 4: 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 5: 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 6: If the applicant is accepted for enrollment, the applicant must submit the original official transcript and certification of graduation.

6. Required Conditions and Notes

Applicants are expected to satisfy each of the following conditions:

- 1) Are foreign nationals currently residing overseas
- 2) Arrival in Japan: Are able to arrive in Japan in time for the semester that begins in April 2027 or October 2027
- 3) Health: Are physically and mentally healthy enough to pursue graduate studies at a university

in Japan

- 4) Language Ability: Have a good command of English
- 5) Security Export Control: Depending on the specifics of the education and research instructions they wish to receive upon entering the doctoral 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 of SOKENDAI for further details.

7. 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 contain more than 10 megabytes, please send them separately, and number each email subject. Additionally, when sending files, please attach them to your email directly without using 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 of submitting the documents, please contact us.

Email address:

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

8. Application Documents

Please read the “Application checklist” on our website.

a) Application Form (attached)

Please attach a photograph (sized 4.5 cm×3.5 cm taken within the past six months, upper body, full-faced with no hat) on the Application Form. Your signature is required on the Application Form.

b) Examination fee: 30,000 yen

For payment details, please refer to “Instructions on how to make a payment” on our website.

c) Official Transcripts

- Applicants applying for the three-year doctoral program must submit the Official Transcripts of each academic year from both undergraduate and graduate schools.
- Applicants applying for the five-year doctoral program must submit the Official Transcripts of each academic year from their undergraduate school.

d) Certificate of Graduation or Expected Graduation (original or certified copies)

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

e) Certified copy of degree diploma

- Applicants who have already graduated from a university must submit certified copies of degree diplomas, as follows:
- Applicants applying for the three-year doctoral program must submit certified copies of their bachelor’s and master’s degree diplomas;
- Applicants applying for the five-year doctoral program must submit a certified copy of their bachelor’s degree diploma;

f) Recommendation letter

Recommendation letter from a person who knows the applicant’s research/academic activities well (e.g., the applicant’s academic supervisor at the university in which the applicant is currently enrolled or the university that the applicant previously attended). addressed to the President of SOKENDAI (Original, free format).

g) Your past research work and activities (if applicable)

h) Summary of your graduation thesis

If the applicant has no theses or publications, please submit a summary of his/her current research project.

i) Field of Study and Research Plan (Attached)

j) Photocopy of the applicant’s passport

A photocopy of the applicant’s passport pages showing the applicant’s name, date of birth, nationality, gender, photograph, and passport number.

k) English score record

- This is to indicate the applicant's language skills (TOEFL iBT or IELTS are accepted). Only the score recorded within two years before the application deadline date is acceptable. The institutional code for TOEFL iBT of SOKENDAI is 7564. The score record should arrive at SOKENDAI on or before the application deadline.
* If the relevant document will not be available before the submission due date, the applicant can (1) send a screenshot of online score report or a copy of term reports to the Graduate Student Affairs Unit in NAOJ (ken-daigakuin@dl.nao.ac.jp) by e-mail, by November 12, 2026, and (2) arrange the official records to be sent to SOKENDAI.
- The applicants who have taken more than half of their high school classes in English do not need to submit English score record regardless of their nationality or the place they were born. The applicants have to ask the Graduate Student Affairs Unit in NAOJ (ken-daigakuin@dl.nao.ac.jp) in advance of application and ensure that they are eligible to skip submitting English score record.

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

- Note that the minimum GRE Subject Test (Physics) score in the paper 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.

Note 7:

- The application documents 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 application documents mentioned above must be prepared using word processing software. Print all the required documents on A4-size paper (if possible).
- Your admission may be rescinded at any time, even after enrollment, if the application documents are found to be invalid or contain false information.

9. 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 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 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 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.

10. Announcement of Result

The result will be announced to all applicants in late December 2026 via email.

11. Admission Procedures

(1) The period of admission procedures is scheduled as follows:

- The middle of March 2027 for the enrollment of April 2027
- Late September 2027 for the enrollment of October 2027

Successful applicants must complete the admission procedures during the prescribed period.

Further details will be provided to successful applicants separately.

(2) Fees required for admission are as follows:

- Entrance Fee: JPY 282,000
- Tuition Fee for six months: JPY 267,900

* If entrance or tuition fees are revised at the time of or during enrollment, the revised fees shall be applied from the date of the revision.

12. Student Visa

Each candidate who is selected as a privately financed student must apply for a visa in person at the nearest Japanese consulate to enter Japan after receiving the Certificate of Eligibility which is mailed from SOKENDAI.

13. 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>

14. 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.