



Application Guidelines for October 2026



NIG Global Scholar (NIG-GS) Selection

Genetics Program, The Graduate University for Advanced Studies, SOKENDAI

Five-year Doctoral Program in Life Sciences

The National Institute of Genetics (NIG) functions as the Genetics Program of the Graduate University for Advanced Studies, SOKENDAI and offers graduate programs in Genetics.

***NIG-GS Selection is only for the five-year doctoral program.**

A limited number of NIG-GS applicants who pass the Secondary Screening and satisfy certain conditions shall be recommended to the Japanese Government (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology – herein referred to as “MEXT”) by SOKENDAI as candidates for the MEXT scholarship. Other applicants who passed the Secondary Screening will be offered the same financial support as students enrolled through General Admission.

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 perspectives 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 are cooperating 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. Genetics Program Outline

The Genetics Program offers education and research opportunities in a variety of cutting-edge disciplines with the goal of investigating biological phenomena based on genetic information. Study and research fields include molecular, cellular, developmental, behavioral, population, and evolutionary genetics, as well as genome biology and bioinformatics. Students can take advantage of a wide range of databases and genetic resources hosted by the National Institute of Genetics (NIG). To nurture independent researchers, the Genetics Program adopts an educational philosophy by which the academic guidance of each individual student is carried out by the entire faculty. For example, graduate students meet with their thesis committee twice a year to receive advice from faculty members outside their host labs. Other features of the Program include the Scientific Presentation/Writing Program and ample financial assistance opportunities.

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.

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 time frame.

4. Qualifications for Application

NIG-GS is designed for Foreign Students residing outside Japan at the time of application and the Genetics Program should be the applicant's first-choice for graduate studies.

Applicants must fulfill one of the following conditions:

- 1) Have completed or are expected to complete at least 16 years of formal 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 in a foreign university or in a foreign educational institute;
- 4) Have completed 15 years of formal education in a foreign country by the end of the month preceding enrollment; (Note)
- 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 the age of 22 years by the end of the month preceding enrollment. (Note)

Notes:

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.

*Besides the above qualifications 1) to 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.

5. Application Procedures

[Application Period]

October 6 to October 28, 2025, 12:00 Noon (Japan Standard Time)

*The application must arrive no later than the end of the application period above without failure.

[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.

*Please note that faculty members who will retire within the standard period of study (5 years from the time of admission) cannot be appointed as supervisors.

Faculty list: <https://www.nig.ac.jp/nig/phd-program/faculty>

[Application Method]

The applicant must submit a complete set of application documents via email attachment. Please confirm the points listed below. The application must reach SOKENDAI no later than the application deadline of 12:00 Noon, October 28, 2025 (JST).

If the attached files exceed 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: gakusei@ml.soken.ac.jp (Student Affairs Section, SOKENDAI)

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

6. Selection Schedule and Method

Primary Screening

November 13, 2025, 12:00 Noon (JST): Deadline for submission of online exam

After submitting the application documents, applicants who meet the eligibility qualifications and conditions will be notified after 12:00 noon on November 7 (JST) and asked to take a written exam via email (to be submitted by 12:00 noon on November 13 (JST)). In this exam, the applicants will be asked to submit a mini report. The mini report is designed to test analytical ability rather than background and/or knowledge; no special preparation is necessary.

Applicants are not allowed to contact any faculty of the Genetics Program from November 7 (distribution of the online written exam) until 12:00 noon on November 13 (JST).

Secondary Screening

January 19 - January 20, 2026: Online Exam

The applicants who proceeded to the Secondary Screening will take the online written exam on January 19 and be interviewed on January 20. January 21 is designed as a contingency day, but the examination is usually carried out within the first two days.

7. Announcement of Result

Preliminary admission and scholarship announcements will be sent in April 2026.

Final announcements will be sent by July 2026.

8. Contact Details for Inquiries

Inquiries regarding selection processes must be directed to:

Academic Services Division, National Institute of Genetics (Genetics Program, SOKENDAI)

Email: info-soken@nig.ac.jp

Application documents must be submitted to / Other inquiries must be directed to:
Student Affairs Section, Division of Academic and Student Affairs
The Graduate University for Advanced Studies, SOKENDAI
Email: gakusei@ml.soken.ac.jp

Application Guidelines for Japanese Government (Monbukagakusho: MEXT) Foreign Research Student Scholarship 2026 (SOKENDAI Recommendation)

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 an undergraduate (bachelor) degree with outstanding academic performance and a minimum GPA of 2.3 on a 3.0 scale or higher. The applicant is expected to maintain the equivalent level for the duration of the scholarship period.

*In case the applicant's GPA cannot be calculated by the Japanese government formula, the applicant must submit a letter of recommendation from the Dean (or person ranking higher than Dean) of the school or university they attended that includes a statement confirming that the applicant is ranked within the top 30% in the school or university.

2) Nationality:

The applicant must hold the nationality of a country that has diplomatic relations with Japan. Applicants with Japanese citizenship at the time of application are not eligible.

We encourage applications from students of "specified nationalities" designated by MEXT.

To see the list of "specified nationalities", please refer to the following webpage.

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

According to the MEXT scholarship selection rules, priority will be given to applicants who hold nationality of one of these countries (especially Southeast Asian countries).

The number of scholarship positions are limited (25% or less) for applicants holding nationalities not on the list of "specified nationalities".

<Applicants from Taiwan>

We accept applications for NIG-GS Selection from Taiwanese applicants, even though they are not eligible for the MEXT scholarship. Before applying, please refer to the following webpage for conditions and other information.

<https://www.nig.ac.jp/nig/phd-program/admissions-top/admissions>

3) Age:

The applicant must have been born on or after April 2, 1991.

4) Academic Background:

The applicant must have completed at least 16 years of formal education in a foreign country

or be expected to have done so by September 30, 2026.

For more details, please see “4. Qualifications for Application” in the Application Guidelines for NIG Global Scholar (NIG-GS) Selection.

5) Study Area:

The study area must be in the same field that the applicant has already 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 refer to the following webpage.

https://www.soken.ac.jp/en/admission/application_info/ms/file/CEFR_1.pdf

- b) Has completed an educational program whose primary language of instruction is English and that satisfies the entrance requirements for the five-year doctoral program at SOKENDAI

7) Health:

The applicant has no physical or mental conditions hindering the applicant's study in Japan

8) Arrival in Japan:

The applicant must be able to arrive in Japan on the dates designated by SOKENDAI between the middle of September and the beginning of October, 2026. (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 travel expenses to Japan.)

9) Visa Requirement:

If selected, the applicant must acquire a “Student (ryugaku)” visa in their 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 2026 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 after the MEXT scholarship period concludes there is no guarantee that your application to reacquire the original residence status will be approved.

10) Others:

Applicants to which any of the following conditions apply will NOT be considered.

- a) Military personnel or 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 followings;
 - (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 applies for another MEXT scholarship;
- e) Has enrolled in a Japanese university with “Student (ryugaku)” status at the time of the application or 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 being received in conjunction with the MEXT scholarship such as a JSPS DC Research Fellowship.

2. Terms of Scholarship

If the grantee directly enrolls in the five-year doctoral program after coming to Japan, the scholarship will be payable for two years (the first two years of the standard program term) (starting in October 2026 and finishing in September 2028). For the grantee to extend his/her scholarship until the end of the standard program term (until September 2031), he/she should apply for an extension of the scholarship that 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 2026 has not been fixed yet.

For reference, the scholarship amount for 2025 is as follows.

Enrolled Doctoral Program	Amount of Stipend per Month
1 and 2-year student of 5-year doctoral program	144,000 yen
3 to 5-year student of 5-year doctoral program	145,000 yen

The amount for 2026 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 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 fees for the admission 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 a selection committee from a pool of applicants recommended by the presidents of all universities in Japan. Based on the results of the screening and selection by the committee, MEXT selects grantees and their scholarship terms.

3) Documents to be submitted:

- a) Application Forms (Form 1-1 and Form 1-2: Attached)
- b) Field of Study and Research Plan (Attached)
- c) Photograph 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.)

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 must submit Official Transcripts for all academic years from undergraduate school. Applicants with master's or doctoral degrees must submit Official Transcripts from graduate schools.

f) Diplomas or degree certificates (originals 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 2026).

➤ Applicants must submit the Certificates of Graduation from their undergraduate schools. Applicants who graduated from graduate schools must also submit the Certificates of Graduation from their graduate schools.

➤ 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 the applicant's academic supervisor.

➤ Please attach a document indicating the position of the person who wrote the recommendation letter.

i) Abstracts of theses

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 either of the following (i. or ii.) to demonstrate their proficiency in English.

- i. Official score report, such as TOEFL iBT or 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 taken the test on or after January 19, 2024.

- ii. A document certifying that the applicant has completed his/her bachelor'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.

- Submit the original official score report by email with application documents.
- Submit a copy of the official score report with application documents and make arrangements for the 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)

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

- ii. IELTS

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

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

- k) Proof of the applicant's specific knowledge and capability in his/her field, such as a commendation for research achievement (Optional)
- l) An essay describing why and what you want to study in the Genetics Program (no more than 1,000 words) (Form 2: Attached)
- m) Books, papers, or lectures that were particularly interesting to you (Form 14-1: Attached)

5. Additional considerations

- 1) 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.
- 2) The documents above (except photograph) must be prepared using word-processing software and saved as a size A4 document. (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 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 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 of time, he/she will NOT receive scholarship payments during that period.
- 3) 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 for further details.