

Graduate Institute for Advanced Studies, SOKENDAI
[Informatics Program]
Application Guidelines October 2026 (SOKENDAI Recommendation)
(Monbukagakusho: MEXT Scholarship Student)
SOKENDAI PGP (The International Priority Graduate Programs)
“Interdisciplinary PhD Program in Information Science and Life Science for Leading
Researchers on AI and Data Science”

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 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 to SOKENDAI. In order to properly judge such abilities, various selections will be made according to the respective fields of specialization.

2. Informatics Program Outlines

Informatics is a scientific field that studies many problems related to information extensively and synthetically. Informatics started as a field based on a core of traditional information science, information engineering and information processing. Now informatics is a multidisciplinary science covering computer science, information technology (IT), artificial intelligence (AI), data sciences, human-machine interfaces, and studies of methods for acquiring and handling information in natural science, humanities, social science, and so on.

Informatics serves as a pillar of all scientific and engineering fields by exploring methods about information, that is, extraction, representation, storing, management, processing, communication, utilization, and update of information. Informatics thus greatly contributes to advanced goals in industry and improvement in human life.

The Informatics Program at SOKENDAI consists of six sub-fields: Foundations of Informatics, Information Infrastructure Science, Software Science, Multimedia Information Science, Intelligent Systems Science, and Information Environment Science. It has a unique education system where National Institute of Informatics (NII) provides an excellent education and research environment for Ph.D. students of the program with rich and advanced IT facilities as well as leading IT researchers. Internationality is also one of the notable strengths of the program; more than 90 students including many foreign students from over ten countries are learning together, and many classes and seminars are conducted in English. Through their daily life in the program, students are able to gain valuable experiences in a multicultural, multilingual environment which will likely help in their future global activities.

List of Faculty: <https://www.nii.ac.jp/graduate/en/about/advisor/>

3. The International Priority Graduate Program Outlines

This MEXT scholarship is offered for the special program "Interdisciplinary PhD Program in Information Science and Life Science for Leading Researchers on Artificial Intelligence and Data Science", which has been granted to SOKENDAI by MEXT. This program aims at developing next-generation global researchers and highly skilled professionals who are capable of leading researches on artificial intelligence and data science as well as other scientific fields.

For this program, application is open to anybody who has any nationality of a country that has diplomatic relations with Japanese government. However, based on the strategy by Japanese government on accepting foreign students to gain from the advancements of other countries, around 40% of the positions are targeted for applicants from South-East Asian countries in this program.

4. 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 timeframe.

5. Qualifications for Application

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.

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)–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.

6. Application Procedures

[Application Period]

November 20 to December 3, 2025*

*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 and confirm whether they can 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 December 3, 2025 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 is any problem with the submitted documents, SOKENDAI will contact the applicant via email.

Mailing address;

Student Affairs Section, Division of Academic and Student Affairs
SOKENDAI (The Graduate University for Advanced Studies)
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 you attach files containing 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)

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

7. Selection Schedule and Method

January 19, 2026 (scheduled): Online interview and document screening

* Interview dates are subject to change.

* The selection method may change depending on the spread of novel coronavirus.

[Preliminary consultation]

The Informatics Program offers all program applicants preliminary consultations with faculty members from whom they wish to receive supervision. This is to allow applicants to select a supervisor of their choice and obtain advice in advance on the content of research to be conducted after admission. Please note that if the supervisor you request is unable to accept you and there is no other suitable supervisor available, you will not be able to participate in the admission selection process. For this reason, please refer to the “Preliminary Consultation” information provided on the program’s website and be sure to select your supervisor through a preliminary consultation.

List of Faculty: <https://www.nii.ac.jp/graduate/en/about/advisor/>

Notes:

*In the Informatics Program, we have introduced a multiple-teaching system in which multiple faculty members work together to provide guidance to students. Under this system, a professor or associate professor joins as a faculty advisor even if the student wishes to receive instruction by an assistant professor, and a system is in place for the student to receive high-quality instruction under a multiple-teaching system that includes assistant professors.

*Please note that some faculty members are not accepting new students due to reasons such as their impending retirement.

[Important notes concerning interviews]

The academic test for admission screening will be conducted by interview. The interview will take 40 minutes. It will consist of a presentation by the applicant and a question-and-answer session regarding the presentation, as well as a question-and-answer session regarding general matters related to basic technical knowledge and the contents of the submitted documents.

Your presentation must present your research plan after admission. In addition, you will be asked to choose an appropriate theme and discuss it for no more than 10 minutes. Examples of themes include the content of research you have conducted thus far, a recent academic

paper or lecture that left a deep impression on you, the content of your Statement of Purpose, and the reason why you want to study in the Informatics Program.

You must submit your presentation materials in advance. The due date, which will be about one week prior to the interview day, will be specified at a later date. Please prepare your materials in PowerPoint or PDF format with a maximum of 10 pages (slides).

["Criteria for grading, evaluation" and "admission decision"]

Your submitted documents and the results of your interview will be comprehensively evaluated to determine the acceptability of your application. Particular attention will be given to the following:

- Willingness to engage in research
- Degree of awareness of the issues involved in research (theme-specific and ingeneral)
- Possession of the basic academic skills necessary to carry out research
- Possession of the communication skills necessary to carry out research

8. Announcement of Result

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

Final announcements will be sent by July 2026.

9. 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

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 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.

3) Age:

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

4) Academic Background:

For the five-year doctoral program, the applicant must have completed a 16-year course of study in an educational institution of a foreign country or is expected to complete such a course by September 30, 2026.

For the details, please see “5. Qualifications for Application” in the application guidelines.

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/application_info/pnp/file/CEFR_1.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 at SOKENDAI.

In fields that require Japanese language proficiency (Japanese linguistics, Japanese literature, Japanese history and Japanese law), the applicant must fulfill at least one of the requirements listed below:

- a) Passed the JLPT (Japanese Language Proficiency Test) with a score of N2 or higher.
- b) Has completed an educational program whose primary language of instruction is Japanese, satisfying 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 mid-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 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 entering 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 there is a possibility that your application for the original residence status may not be approved after the period of MEXT scholarship student.

10) Others:

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

- 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 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 already won a scholarship that is prohibited from receiving along with the MEXT scholarship such as JSPS DC Research Fellowships.

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.

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 Stipends 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

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.

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 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 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 (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) Diploma or degree certificate (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 Certificate of Graduation from their undergraduate school. Applicants who graduated from graduate schools must submit the Certificates of Graduation from 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 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, 2024.
 - ii. 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.

- Applicants submit the original official score report by mail with application documents.
- Applicants 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 since applicants ask ETS to send it.

ii. IELTS

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

If the applicant 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).

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 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 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 and others) not approved for acceptance in conjunction with the MEXT Scholarship;
 - g) When the recipient proceeds to higher courses 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;
- 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.