

Graduate Institute for Advanced Studies, SOKENDAI
[Molecular Science Program]
Doctoral Program 2026
Special Admissions for Applicants Residing Abroad
(Privately Financed International Students)

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. Molecular Science Program Outline

This program, offered by the Institute for Molecular Science (Okazaki City; denoted as IMS), fosters a future generation of researchers who will establish a systematic understanding of molecules—which are the basic constituent units of matter—and elucidate the diverse phenomena that matter presents. This program aims to produce graduates who can conduct advanced research (experiments, measurements, theories, etc.), rationally understand the results of their research, challenge unexplored problems with creative ideas, create new intellectual values and universal truths, and contribute to the development of humanity based on molecular science.

URL: <https://www.ims.ac.jp/en/education/>

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 2026	October 2026
Three-year doctoral program	A few students	A few students
Five-year doctoral program	A few students	A few students

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.

Notes:

*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.

*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.

*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.

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 before the application period.

*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. 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 2026 or October 2026.
- 3) Health: Are physically and mentally healthy enough to complete graduate studies at a university in Japan.
- 4) Language Ability: Have a good command of English or Japanese.
- 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]

Program	First round	Second round
Three-year doctoral program (April 2026 admission)	From Thursday, May 29 to Wednesday, June 25, 2025*	
Three-year doctoral program (October 2026 admission)	From Thursday, May 29 to Wednesday, June 25, 2025*	From Thursday, November 6 to Wednesday, December 3, 2025*
Five-year doctoral program (April 2026 admission)	From Friday, July 25 to Friday, August 22, 2025*	
Five-year doctoral program (October 2026 admission)	From Friday, July 25 to Friday, August 22, 2025*	From Thursday, November 6 to Wednesday, 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 he/she 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.

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)

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

8. Application Documents

Please read "Application checklist" on our website.

1) 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.

2) Examination fee: 30,000 yen

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

3) 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.

4) Certificate of Graduation or Expected Graduation (originals 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.

5) 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.
- 6) 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)
 - 7) Your past research work and activities (if applicable)
 - 8) Summary of your graduation thesis
If the applicant has no theses or publications, please submit a summary of his/her current research project.
 - 9) Field of Study and Research Plan (Attached)
 - 10) Photocopy of the applicant's passport pages showing the applicant's name, date of birth, nationality, gender, photograph, and passport number.
 - 11) TOEFL, TOEIC or IELTS score (Only applicants for the Five-year doctoral program)
In principle, applicants must submit the TOEIC, TOEFL or IELTS score record within the application period. If the applicants cannot submit the TOEIC, TOEFL or IELTS score record within the application period, they need to submit Attached Form with their application and submit the English score (original) by the deadline (first round: Friday, August 29, 2025, second round: Friday, December 26, 2025). (Not e-mail)
For the detail about the required TOEFL, TOEIC or IELTS score, please find "9. Selection schedule and Method".
 - 12) Elective Registration Form for Specialized Subjects for the Written Examination. (Only applicants for the Five-year doctoral program)
Applicants must choose two subjects they wish to answer from the following six subjects when applying. Physical Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, Inorganic Chemistry, Biological Chemistry, Physics A (classical mechanics, electromagnetism), Physics B (quantum mechanics, thermodynamics and statistical mechanics).
 - 13) How to take the exam (Only applicants for the Three-year doctoral program)
Applicants are required to choose whether to take the exam at the venue or through the Internet remotely with this form.

Notes:

- 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

1. A Three-year Doctoral Program

[Selection Method]

Selection will be done based on submitted application documents and interviews. In the interview, applicants are requested to present the details of their previous research (Master thesis or equivalence) for 15 minutes and future plan that they wish to conduct as their PhD works for 5 minutes. The presentation will be followed by the 10 minutes discussion. English or Japanese will be used.

(Residents in Japan)

The interview will take place at Institute for Molecular Science in Aichi, Japan. A PC projector is available.

(Residents abroad)

Applicants can choose to take the exam either at the venue or through the Internet remotely (according to the form “**How to take the exam**”).

If applicants choose to take the exam at the venue, the interview will take place at Institute for Molecular Science in Aichi, Japan. A PC projector is available. Please note that the department office will NOT make arrangement for applicants to obtain a short-term stay visa for entrance examination, air tickets and/or accommodation.

If applicants choose to take the exam through the Internet remotely, the interview will be conducted via Zoom.

In the interview, applicant's scholastic and research abilities, motivation for research, originality, future potential, etc. will comprehensively be evaluated. Total scores of the interview, previous research and academic records will consequently be judged.

Notes:

IMS will provide financial supports as Research Assistant program to students. IMS will also provide IMS SRA Supports to outstanding students. For details of application to IMS SRA Supports, see the website:

<https://www.ims.ac.jp/en/education/sra.html>

Those who are applying for IMS SRA Supports, interview will be conducted as stated in selection method for IMS SRA Supports.

[Selection Schedule]

	First round	Second round
April 2026 admission	From Monday, August 25 to Tuesday, August 26, 2025	
October 2026 admission	From Monday, August 25 to Tuesday, August 26, 2025	From Monday, January 26 to Tuesday January 27, 2026

2. A Five-year Doctoral Program

[Selection Method]

Selection will be done based on submitted application documents, written examinations and interviews.

Applicants are required to obtain the below-mentioned TOEFL, TOEIC or IELTS score. Please make sure that applicants are not allowed to take main entrance examination unless he or she is qualified by required TOEFL, TOEIC or IELTS scores.

Required TOEFL, TOEIC or IELTS score:

TOEFL: Official Score Report or Examinee's Score Report. The score must be PBT500, iBT61, or higher.

TOEIC: Official Score Certificate of TOEIC test or IP test. The score must be 586 or higher.

IELTS: IELTS (Academic Module) Test Report Form. The score must be 5.0 or higher.

* Expired score certificates are also acceptable.

* English test scores may not be necessary for the applicants who are native speaker of English or graduated universities in the countries where English is a native language and education is made in English.

The evaluation proceeds as follows.

1) Examination of application documents: conducted by referring to submitted transcripts etc.

2) Written examination:

Specialized subjects (120 minutes): Applicants must choose two subjects they wish to answer from the following six subjects when applying: (i) physical chemistry, (ii) organic chemistry, (iii) inorganic chemistry, (iv) biological chemistry, (v) physics A (classical mechanics, electromagnetism), and (vi) physics B (quantum mechanics, thermodynamics and statistical mechanics). Each subject has two questions, and applicants select any three questions out of four questions from the subjects of their choice.

3) Face-to-face Interview: 15-minutes oral examination will be carried out to evaluate the applicant's fundamental scientific knowledge, research ability and motivation for research etc.

The written examination and the face-to-face interview will be held in Institute for Molecular Science, Okazaki, Japan, according to the schedule below. Applicants will be separately informed of additional selection details after their application documents have been received.

Please note that SOKENDAI/IMS do not give applicants any support in obtaining a visa, airline tickets, or arranging accommodations when visiting Japan for the entrance examination. Applicants of foreign nationalities who live abroad must prepare the necessary procedures for visiting Japan by themselves.

[Selection Schedule]

	First round	Second round
April 2026 admission	From Monday, September 29 to Tuesday, September 30, 2025	
October 2026 admission	From Monday, September 29 to Tuesday, September 30, 2025	From Monday, January 26 to Tuesday January 27, 2026

10. Announcement of Result

Program	First round	Second round
Three-year doctoral program (April 2026 admission)	Mid-September, 2025	
Three-year doctoral program (October 2026 admission)	Mid-September, 2025	Mid-February, 2026
Five-year doctoral program (April 2026 admission)	Mid-October, 2025	
Five-year doctoral program (October 2026 admission)	Mid-October, 2025	Mid-February, 2026

The result will be announced to all applicants via email.

11. Admission Procedures

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

The middle of March 2026 for the enrollment of April 2026

Late September 2026 for the enrollment of October 2026

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

Further details will be provided separately to successful applicants.

(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. 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