

Graduate Institute for Advanced Studies, SOKENDAI
[Space and Astronautical 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 which are for graduates with academic abilities equivalent to master's degree and bachelor's degree, respectively.
- 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. Space and Astronautical Science Program Outline

Space and Astronautical Science Program offers students in-depth research guidance in space science, focusing on astrophysics and solar system sciences from space, as well as astronautical engineering. The latter includes research and development of cutting-edge space technologies aimed at practical space application. One of the unique features of this program is that students get involved in some of the world's most advanced large-scale projects. Through this involvement, they acquire not only extensive knowledge of space science, but also skills in planning and designing spacecraft development projects.

[Research Fields and Advisers]

<https://www.isas.jaxa.jp/sokendai/e>

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
	October 2026
Three-year doctoral program	A few students
Five-year doctoral program	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 September 1, 2025.

*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 September 1, 2025.

*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 October 2026.
- 3) Health: Are physically and mentally healthy enough to be able to carry out his/her graduate studies 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]

October 1 to October 31, 2025 at 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 and confirm that 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 of October 31, 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 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) Qualifications that prove the applicant's language skill
 - A copy of Official Score Certificate, Official Score Report, or Examinee's Score report, such as TOEFL, IELTS or TOEIC L&R and S&W must be enclosed with application documents.
 - English test scores may not be necessary for the applicants who are studying or graduate from the universities in the countries where English is a native language and submit academic transcript from those universities.

12) 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.

13) Applicants are strongly recommended to take GRE Subject Test (Physics) before or in September, 2025. The applicants who will take the GRE test in October, 2025, must follow the directions below; (i) include a copy of registration confirmation e-mail from ETS to the application documents, (ii) send a screenshot of online record to sokendai@ml.jaxa.jp (Student Affairs Section of the Space and Astronautical Science Program) by e-mail before the end of November, 2025 and (iii) arrange the official records to be sent to SOKENDAI.

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

We will carry out the selection in two steps. The first step is a paper screening (including a test of English). Only the applicants who pass the first step can proceed to the interview (the second step).

[Three-year doctoral program]

1) Paper screening

We examine contents of the transcripts from Master course, application forms, TOEFL, IELTS or TOEIC score, Master's thesis and its supplemental materials. English test scores may not be necessary for the applicants who are studying or graduated from the universities in the countries where English is a native language. If applicant is a prospective graduate of Master course and cannot submit Master's thesis at the time of applying, please submit it when it is ready, after having sent other application documents.

2) Interview

The interview will be held on a day in December 2025 for selected applicants. At the interview, 20 minutes are allocated for presentation while another 20 minutes are for question-and-answer

session. Presentation is expected to focus on applicant's motivation for future research, as well as his or her plans and goals, while contents of Master's thesis or its equivalent need to be included also. Applicant is requested to send his/her presentation material prior to the interview. Question and answer session is conducted based on contents of the presentation and submitted documents.

[Five-year doctoral program]

1) Paper screening

We examine contents of the transcripts from the undergraduate school, application forms, and TOEFL, IELTS or TOEIC score. English test scores may not be necessary for the applicants who are studying or graduated from the universities in the countries where English is a native language and submit academic transcript from those universities.

2) Interview

The interview will be held on a day in December 2025 for selected applicants. At the interview, 10 minutes are allocated for presentation while another 10 minutes are for question-and-answer session. Presentation is expected to focus on applicant's motivation for future research, as well as his or her plans and goals. Applicant is requested to send his/her presentation material prior to the interview. Question and answer session is conducted based on contents of the presentation and submitted documents.

10. Announcement of Result

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

11. Admission Procedures

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

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

Student Insurance Fee (Personal Accident Insurance for Students Pursuing Education and Research): JPY 5,750 (Five-year doctoral program),

JPY 3,620 (Three-year doctoral program)

*If entrance or tuition fees or student insurance 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