

Support for Pioneering Research Initiated by the Next Generation (SPRING)

- Doctoral Student Support Project -

Application Guideline [AY2026]

The University of Tsukuba has been selected by JST (Japan Science and Technology Agency) as one of the universities / colleges that leads promising students through their program “Support for Pioneering Research Initiated by the Next Generation (SPRING).” Through this program, the University provides financial support (living & research allowance, hereinafter referred to as Research Fellowship) to our promising doctoral students in the form of grants. The overview of the JST project “SPRING” and our application requirements are shown below.

Please note that new applications for “University Fellowship Establishment Program (Fellowship)” will no longer be accepted from 2026 onwards.

■ Purpose of the Project

- As a support program administered by the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST), this initiative primarily aims to assist Japanese students in advancing to doctoral programs. In addition to this, the University of Tsukuba provides sufficient research funding to all PhD students, regardless of whether they are Japanese or international, and supports free, challenging, and interdisciplinary research that transcends existing frameworks.
- To support the PhD students to devote themselves to their own research.
- To guide outstanding doctoral students toward becoming PhD graduates capable of succeeding in diverse fields across academia, industry, and society

■ The University’s Commitment to the Project “SPRING”

- The Project Run by the University of Tsukuba;

<Project Title >

「学問分野の壁を超えて多様な人材と共創できるトランスボーダー型価値創造人材育成プロジェクト」

～予測不能な社会変容にも対応して世界を変える力を備えた、多様なキャリアパスで活躍できる博士人材育成～

Transborder Human Capital Development Project: Fostering Agile Doctoral Students in a VUCA World

- Project Officer
KATO Mitsuyasu - Executive and Provost

■ Project Period

From AY2021 to AY2026*

*In case of the PhD students in Medical Sciences; AY2027

1. Class A

Course	Target	Support Period
Doctoral Program (区分制の博士後期課程)	2026/4 and 2025/10 1st year enrollees	From AY2026 to AY2028 (3 years)
3 rd year of PhD course (3年制博士課程)	2026/4 and 2025/10 1st year enrollees	Students enroll in October 2025 or students who 2.5 years left in their standard study period: April 2026 to September 2028 (2.5 years)
Enrolled in the Doctoral Course 一貫制博士課程 (Medical Sciences not included)	2026/4 and 2025/10 3 rd year admitted/transferred students Or Students who have passed the mid-term exams etc., and who have 3 years or 2.5 years left in their standard study period.	
Medical Sciences	2026/4 1st year enrollees	From AY2026 to AY2029 (4 years)

* To continue this program, a new application will be reviewed each year.

* Even if the student's standard study period is extended due to a leave absence, etc., the program period will not change. However, for leaves of absence due to life events such as childbirth or childcare, the support period may be suspended or extended depending on individual circumstances. (The maximum duration for the Research Incentive Fund is three or four years.)

* Foreign students, who are not able to come in Japan yet, can apply as well. However, if after being selected, you are not in Japan by the time the payments start, your application will be cancelled.

(1-1) Class A Category 1 Japanese Nationals, etc.

(1-1-1) Fellowship Amount

Category1S (Superior) : Particularly superior students (aprx.25% out of recipients):

2.9 million yen (2.4 million yen for living (Research Incentive Fund), 500,000 yen for research)

Category1E (Excellent): Excellent students (aprx.75% out of recipients) :

2.72 million yen (2.22 million yen for living (Research Incentive Fund), 500,000 yen for research)

[Note]

*1 The amount of the Research Fellowship is subject to change depending on JST's budget availability.

*2 The classification level will be determined by the project committee.

(1-1-2) Number of Students Recruited: About 68 students

(1-1-3) Application Requirements

- Students who meet the ["Eligible conditions for doctoral student receiving SPRING Research Incentive Fund equivalent to living expenses at the University of Tsukuba"](#).
- Highly motivated students who are keen on developing their career path
- Students who aim to work hard and productively in unique and interdisciplinary research studies that can contribute SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals)
- Students who will try to interact with companies or making chances to work in various fields by:
 - Participating in long term internship / Working as research staff
 - Participating in social events such as company networking events, or gatherings for PhD students
 - Having some experience abroad such as through study-abroad or other experience
- Foreign national students: To have the intention to work and settle in Japan after graduating from the University of Tsukuba.

(1-1-4) Students who are not Eligible

Students who apply to the following conditions are NOT ELIGIBLE to apply for this project in 2026:

- ① Recipients of government-funded research grants intended to support students in pursuing their own independent, challenging, and interdisciplinary research, similar to the SPRING program (Programs that provide government funding equivalent to living expenses and research funds: SPRING, BOOST, JSPS Research Fellows (DC), JICA, NEXUS, etc.)
- ② Students who work for a company and receive a sufficient and stable level of income for living expenses (more than 2.4 million yen/year)*
- ③ Students who have received a sufficient level of scholarship (more than 2.4 million yen/year) related to living expenses.
- ④ Students who are on "Leave of Absence" as of April 2026

(1-1-5) Required Documents

- ① Research Plan for Students Eligible for Research Funds: Category1 or BOOST/SPRING

[Note]

When you write a plan, please include either of the following:

- (a) How can your research theme contribute to the SDGs (*United Nations Development Program)
- (b) How can your research theme contribute to future society in the next 30 or 50 years.

For students who were enrolled in the University with the Special Selection of Working Individuals, students who were employed at the time of admission, and students who are in "the early completion program for working people" and foreign national students, the university may request additional documents, such as the previous year's withholding tax statement or other proof of income, as well as a copy of their Residence Card.

(1-2) Class A Category 2 International Students

(1-2-1) Fellowship Amount: 500,000 yen for research

(1-2-2) Number of Students Recruited: About 102 students

(1-2-3) Application Requirements

- Students residing in Japan on a “STUDENT” visa status
- Foreign national students who don't meet the ["Eligible conditions for doctoral student receiving SPRING Research Incentive Fund equivalent to living expenses at the University of Tsukuba"](#)
- Highly motivated students who are keen on developing their career path
- Students who aim to work hard and productively in unique and interdisciplinary research studies that can contribute SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals)
- Students who will try to interact with companies or making chances to work in various fields by:
 - Participating in long term internship / Working as research staff
 - Participating in social events such as company networking events, or gatherings for PhD students
 - Having some experience abroad such as through study-abroad or other experience
 -

(1-2-4) Students who are not Eligible

Students who apply to the following conditions are NOT ELIGIBLE to apply for this project in 2026:

- ① Recipients of government-funded research grants intended to support students in pursuing their own independent, challenging, and interdisciplinary research, similar to the SPRING program (Programs that provide government funding equivalent to living expenses and research funds: SPRING, BOOST, JSPS Research Fellows (DC), JICA, NEXUS, etc.)
- ② Students who work for a company and receive a sufficient and stable level of income for living expenses (more than 2.4 million yen/year)*
- ③ Students who are on “Leave of Absence” as of April 2026

MEXT Scholar and foreign government Scholar can apply for the SPRING Category 2, however only MEXT Scholar belonging to a foreign government must apply for the SPRING Category 3.

(1-2-5) Required Documents

- ① Research Plan for Students Eligible for Research Funds: Category 2 or BOOST/SPRING

[Note]

When you write a plan, please include either of the following:

- (a) How can your research theme contribute to the SDGs (*United Nations Development Program)
- (b) How can your research theme contribute to future society in the next 30 or 50 years.

(1-3) Class A Category 3 Working Students

(1-3-1) Fellowship Amount: 400,000 yen for research

(1-3-2) Number of Students Recruited: About 102 students

(1-3-3) Application Requirements

Students who meet any of the following criteria

- Students residing in Japan on a “STUDENT” visa status
- Students who are receiving a stable or fixed income from wages etc., at a sufficient level equivalent to living expenses (2.4 million yen or more per year.) Additionally, student who is an officer or employee of a corporation or organization with legal personality in Japan, a national or local civil servant of Japan. (including Japanese branches of foreign companies)
- Students who are currently only belonging to an overseas university, a public research institution, and other non-profit organization, except the University of Tsukuba. (Regardless of whether you receive income)
- Students who are receiving the Japanese Government (MEXT) Scholarship for International Student (KOKUHI) and who currently belong to the home country's government or government agencies, except the University of Tsukuba.

(1-3-4) Students who are not Eligible

Students who apply to the following conditions are NOT ELIGIBLE to apply for this project in 2026:

- ① Recipients of government-funded research grants intended to support students in pursuing their own independent, challenging, and interdisciplinary research, similar to the SPRING program (Programs that provide government funding equivalent to living expenses and research funds: SPRING, BOOST, JSPS Research Fellows (DC), JICA, NEXUS, etc.)
Students who belong to an overseas for-profit organization or corporation (Regardless of whether you receive income) (including overseas branches of Japanese companies)
- ② Students who are on “Leave of Absence” as of April 2026

(1-3-6) Required Documents

- ② Research Plan for Students Eligible for Research Funds: Category 3

[Note]

When you write a plan, please include either of the following:

- (a) How can your research theme contribute to the SDGs (*United Nations Development Program)
- (b) How can your research theme contribute to future society in the next 30 or 50 years.

2. Class B

Students enrolled in the following as of April 2026

Course	Target	Support Period
Doctoral Program (区分制の博士後期課程)	Students who have 2 years or 1.5 years left in their standard study period.	From AY2026 to AY2027 (2 years)
3 rd year of PhD course (3年制博士課程)		Students who have 1.5 years left in their standard study period: April 2026 to September 2027 (1.5 years)
Enrolled in the Doctoral Course 一貫制博士課程 (Medical Sciences not included)	Students who have passed the mid-term exams etc., and who 2 years or 1.5 years left in their standard study period.	
Medical Sciences	Students who have 2 or 3 years left in standard study period.	

* To continue this program, a new application will be reviewed each year.

* Even if the student's standard study period is extended due to a leave absence, etc., the program period will not change. However, for leaves of absence due to life events such as childbirth or childcare, the support period may be suspended or extended depending on individual circumstances. (The maximum duration for the research fund is three or four years.)

(2-1) Class B Category 1 Japanese Nationals, etc.

* SPRING Category 2 and Category 3 recruitment is not open to Class B students.

(2-1-1) Fellowship Amount

Category1S (Superior) : Particularly superior students (aprx.25% out of recipients):

2.9 million yen (2.4 million yen for living (Research Incentive Fund), 500,000 yen for research)

Category1E (Excellent): Excellent students (aprx.75% out of recipients) :

2.72 million yen (2.22 million yen for living (Research Incentive Fund), 500,000 yen for research)

[Note]

- *1 The amount of the Research Fellowship is subject to change depending on JST's budget availability.
- *2 The classification level will be determined by the project committee.

(2-1-2) Number of Students Recruited: About 25 students

(2-1-3) Application Requirements

- Students who meet the ["Eligible conditions for doctoral student receiving SPRING Research Incentive Fund equivalent to living expenses at the University of Tsukuba"](#).
- Highly motivated students who are keen on developing their career path

- Students who aim to work hard and productively in unique and interdisciplinary research studies that can contribute SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals)
- Students who will try to interact with companies or making chances to work in various fields by:
 - Participating in long term internship / Working as research staff
 - Participating in social events such as company networking events, or gatherings for PhD students
 - Having some experience abroad such as through study-abroad or other experience
- Foreign national students: To have the intention to work and settle in Japan after graduating from the University of Tsukuba.

(2-1-4) Students who are not Eligible

Students who apply to the following conditions are NOT ELIGIBLE to apply for this project in 2026:

- ① Recipients of government-funded research grants intended to support students in pursuing their own independent, challenging, and interdisciplinary research, similar to the SPRING program (Programs that provide government funding equivalent to living expenses and research funds: SPRING, BOOST, JSPS Research Fellows (DC), JICA, NEXUS, etc.)
- ② Students who work for a company and receive a sufficient and stable level of income for living expenses (more than 2.4 million yen/year)*
- ③ Students who have received a sufficient level of scholarship (more than 2.4 million yen/year) related to living expenses.
- ④ Students who are on "Leave of Absence" as of April 2026

(2-1-5) Required Documents

- ① Research Plan for Students Eligible for Research Funds: Category1 or BOOST/SPRING

[Note]

When you write a plan, please include either of the following:

- (c) How can your research theme contribute to the SDGs (*United Nations Development Program)
- (d) How can your research theme contribute to future society in the next 30 or 50 years.

For students who were enrolled in the University with the Special Selection of Working Individuals, students who were employed at the time of admission, and students who are in "the early completion program for working people" and foreign national students, the university may request additional documents, such as the previous year's withholding tax statement or other proof of income, as well as a copy of their Residence Card.

3. Where / How to Submit

Submit your application during the submission period below, through "u-Rad a management system for internal grants" after logging in using the university's unified authentication ID.

Please note that the submission URLs differ for SPRING Categories 1, 2 & BOOST, and SPRING

Category 3.

【筑波大学】2026 年度春季 博士後期課程学生支援プロジェクト SPRING (区分 1、2) & BOOST

<AY 2026 Spring> SPRING (Category1,2 & BOOST)

https://u-rad.sec.tsukuba.ac.jp/login/index.php?support_id=TwB%2F6e02neM3%2F1SR72j7Gg%3D%3D

【筑波大学】2026 年度春季 博士後期課程学生支援プロジェクト SPRING (区分 3)

<AY 2026 Spring> SPRING (Category 3)

https://u-rad.sec.tsukuba.ac.jp/login/index.php?support_id=y6sW70iK%2BRbjcn1rWjBizg%3D%3D

Submit the application form in PDF data (file name: application category A or B or C, student ID number, name, degree name)

Submit the application form as a PDF data (the file name: application class and category, student ID number, name, degree program name"). (Example: A1_202699999_Taro Tsukuba_PolicyandPlanningSciences)

4. Submission Period

May 12 (Tue), 2026 to May 18 (Mon), 2026 5PM *Late applications cannot be accepted.

5. Awardee Tasks

(1) Mandatory Tasks

- To take the online course "APRIN research ethics e-learning program (eAPRIN)" (Selected students will be notified separately on how to attend)
- To submit the reports: "Research Progress Report" and "Final Reports"
- To participate in the research presentation hosted by the program
- To submit the pledge to agree with sharing your email address with the JST
- The University is expected to report follow-up of the awardees' career for more than 10 years.
- To register for the matching system for Job-type research internships
- To register for "PhD x FUTURE.", a matching system for young researchers
- To acquire more than one credit in the Graduate General Education Courses Program

(2) Tasks to be implemented as far as possible

To develop your career path proactively, please implement the following tasks as far as possible:

- Study abroad (or some overseas experiences equivalent to studying abroad)
- To participate in the mutual exchange activities between Japanese students and international students through the campus mini-camp (tentative; cooperative study and exchange meetings involving overnight stay)
- To engage in long term internship / working as research staff
- To participate in social gatherings of awardees conducted by JST
- To participate actively in events / activities offered by the Project Officer of the university

6. Revocation of Fellowship

If the Project Officer determines that the awardee has met any of the conditions described below, the awardee will be given guidance on improvement. If the awardee does not show improvement, this fellowship will be terminated.

- Not accomplish the assigned tasks
- Not proceeding research as planned

In cases such as a false application or research misconduct, the approval will be revoked and the recipient will have to return the whole amount of the fellowship already paid.

7. Others

- (1) The selection results (the recipient of fellowship) will be disclosed on the University website.
- (2) Research Incentive Fund (equivalent to living expenses) for SPRING Category 1 students, will be considered miscellaneous income. Therefore, it will be necessary to declare it in the following year.

[References for SPRING Category 1 student]

(1) Income Tax (Allowance for Dependents)

A tax allowance per each dependent is granted to the taxpayer who has dependent family. If the dependent member's income (January to December) exceeds JPY 480 000, the tax allowance cannot be taken in the following year. In addition, the residence tax of the following year will be calculated according to the income of the year

(2) Health Insurance – Family Membership

The annual income of a dependent family member must be less than JPY 1.3 million. Since the living allowance is considered income, the recipients will need to join the National Health Insurance (国民健康保険) themselves.

(3) Tuition Fee Exemption

The major factors of selection are usually finance and the applicants' family structure. Depending on the applicant's incomes (including the fellowships), the waiver may not be granted.

8. Contact Information

Division of Student Welfare, Department of Student Affairs, University of Tsukuba
E-mail: gk.jst-spring@un.tsukuba.ac.jp