

Tohoku University Advanced Graduate School Research Initiative for International Scholarly Excellence Program

Application Guidelines for April 2025

(for doctoral course students)

Tohoku University's Advanced Graduate School Research Initiative for International Scholarly Excellence Program (hereafter, "program") is a successor support initiative to the Pioneering Research Support Project. It is aimed at excellent PhD students with a strong desire to pursue studies/research in interdisciplinary, international, or academic/industry collaborative areas. It provides financial support sufficient for living expenses, diverse training programs to increase their research abilities, and research grants. It also seeks to improve their research environment by offering an international showcase for their activities. Furthermore, it will accelerate career path building with an eye toward expanding their range of activity after graduation. It will promote quantitative expansion and radical restructuring of PhD curricula, leading to enhanced research capacity for the university overall.

Students who wish to apply for support through this program should submit their application via their graduate school (or their program office, if enrolled in a specific degree program).

1. Recruitment Quota

Approximately 110 students in total.

2. Period of Award

From April 2025 until the end of the standard course term for the curriculum.

3. Stipend

1) Incentive Stipend (covers living expenses) JPY 180,000/month

※The stipend is considered "miscellaneous income." Recipients must report it when they file their income tax declaration.

※International students, who are not yet able to come to Tohoku University, will be eligible for only the research grant and research expenses once they arrive and complete the necessary procedures.

2) Research grant: JPY 340,000/year (tentative)

※Further research grants etc., may be allocated as competitive funding.

4. Eligibility

This program is open to those who understand its objectives; have a high motivation/curiosity regarding research activities in their specialized fields; possess the awareness and motivation to play a pivotal role in shaping the future society by obtaining their doctoral degree; and will be enrolled in the 1st through 3rd years of 3-year doctoral curricula, or the 1st through 4th years of medical, dental, or pharmaceutical curricula, when the stipend begins.

*Those who plan to take a leave of absence from April 2025 are not eligible to apply.

5. Restriction on Simultaneous Awards

Those who are receiving any of the following types of financial aid cannot receive support from this program.

1. Those who are receiving other scholarships from Tohoku University or other public institutions.
2. Those who are receiving a scholarship from Tohoku University's Academia-Industry Collaborating Graduate Programs.
3. Those who are receiving the JSPS Research Fellowship for Young Scientists.

4. Those who are receiving incentive stipends or other financial support from the Tohoku University Advanced Graduate School Pioneering Research Support Project.
5. Those who are receiving incentive stipends or other financial support from Tohoku University Advanced Graduate School Next-Generation AI Expert Development Project.
6. Those who are receiving a salary as per the Guidelines for the Japanese Government (MEXT) International Student Scholarship System (March 31, 1954, ruling by the Minister of Education).
7. Those who are receiving the JASSO Honors Scholarship for Privately Financed International Students.
8. International students who are receiving a scholarship from their own country.
9. Those who receive salary income, executive compensation, or stable non-repayable scholarship or other support equivalent to this program from a company, university, or private organization (the total of all income of 1.8 million yen per year or more (the total monthly amount of more than 150,000 yen equivalent), excluding this program).
10. Those who are deemed to be equivalent to any of those listed in the preceding items.

※Even if you are receiving a scholarship or have income, etc. that falls under the above-mentioned restrictions on receiving multiple scholarships at the time of application, you may still apply if you are able to decline that scholarship or income after being selected for this program.

※This program aims to provide an environment where students can devote themselves to their research. Therefore, students who are employed (regardless of whether their employment on a fixed term basis) or hired part-time (including Teaching Assistant (TA), Research Assistant (RA), and Administrative Assistant (AA)) and if they have estimated income for one year from the time of employment or hiring exceeds 1.8 million yen, they must withdraw from this program at the time of employment or hiring. In addition, regardless of the annual income, etc., if the student is unable to devote themselves to research activities, they must withdraw from this program. In some cases, it may be necessary to ask for the retroactive return of incentive stipends, etc., so please keep this in mind.

※Recipients of Tohoku University's Global Hagi Scholarship may apply to the program but if selected will be required to decline the Global Hagi Scholarship.

※If the scholarship you are receiving does not allow you to receive the other financial aid, you need to follow the rules of that scholarship. When you are selected to this program, you will be required to follow the necessary procedures, which may include withdrawing from the current scholarship.

※Recipients are permitted to receive scholarship loans from JASSO. However, in case the recipient becomes a Type 1 Scholar in a doctoral course after FY2023, they will not be eligible for repayment waiver.

※Scholarships etc., for the purpose of supporting travel expenses etc., for overseas study, available regardless of the amount, can be received simultaneously with this program. Please also check the restrictions on receiving duplicate scholarships on the scholarship side.

※It is to apply for both this program and the JSPS Research Fellowship for Young Scientists concurrently, but if you are selected for the Research Fellowship, you must withdraw from this program.

※Teaching Assistant (TA) and Research Assistant (RA) employment of up to 19 hours per week is permitted to the extent that it does not interfere with research activities. However, it must be included in the recipient's income as per section 7 above, including salary, pension, etc., and the recipient must decline the support from the program if their total income etc., exceeds JPY 1.8 million. Recipients must report their annual income status.

- ※Recipients of this program may be eligible for tuition waiver. However, please keep in mind that if they withdraw from this program, they will also be disqualified from tuition waiver eligibility.
- ※Be sure to review the "Handbook for Incentive Stipend Recipients" and "AGS RISE Program Q&A" after being selected for this program.

6. Application Documents

Please prepare the following application documents and submit them by the deadline specified by your graduate school.

- 1) Application Form (doctoral program research plan, list of achievements, essay regarding the "Interdisciplinary and International Vision")
- 2) Recommendation letter from your academic advisor
- 3) Any other documents requested by your graduate school

7. Selection Method

Applicants will be recommended by the graduate school dean, then evaluated on their research plans, content, achievements, written student evaluations from academic advisors.

8. Announcement of Selection Results

Selection results will be announced through the applicants' graduate schools by the end of April 2025.

Students selected for the program will belong to the "Pioneering Research Program Unit" of the Advanced Graduate School.

9. Obligations

- 1) In addition to devoting themselves to their research activities, as outlined in their research plans, recipients are expected to understand the program's purpose and commit to their studies/research with a suitably sober attitude. If a recipient engages in inappropriate behavior or misconduct, the payment may be withdrawn.
- 2) Recipients must enroll in the Advanced Graduate School Training/Career-Building Programs offered by the Center for Graduate School Innovation, Advanced Graduate School.
- 3) Recipients must submit a monthly attendance report. They must also promptly report their progress in their studies and research to the director of the Center for Graduate School Innovation at the end of each fiscal year.
- 4) As the stipend is considered "miscellaneous income," recipients must pay income tax. The stipend may disqualify recipients from being claimed as dependents by parents/guardians (for health insurance, dependent allowances, etc.). Recipients should check with their parents/guardians or parents'/guardians' workplaces and perform any necessary procedures.
- 5) The deadline for using the research grant (delivery of goods, completion of business

trips, etc.) is the last day of March of the following year. Please follow the instructions of the accounting section of your affiliated department regarding the deadlines for payment procedures, etc.

- 6) To ensure appropriate use of the research grant, recipients are required to carefully read the "Use of Research Funds Handbook," undergo compliance education on improper use of research funds, attend classes on ethical research, research ethics education e-learning, and manage the budget appropriately for your own research.
- 7) The academic advisors will oversee matters related to handling intellectual property and confidential materials to ensure that the recipients' research is conducted appropriately and yields usable results.
- 8) Recipients are required to cooperate with follow-up activities conducted by the Advanced Graduate School's Center for Graduate School Innovation and others to improve learning/research guidance systems including career development/support, degree programs, and graduate degree screening processes.
- 9) Those who are selected for this program are strongly encouraged to apply for the JSPS Research Fellowship for Young Scientists.