

Support for Pioneering Research Initiated by the Next Generation (SPRING)
- Doctoral Student Support Project –
Application Guideline [AY2025]

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 2025 onwards.

■ **Purpose of the Project**

- Supporting PhD students to devote themselves to unrestricted, challenging and interdisciplinary research projects
- Supporting the students to devote themselves to their own research by covering their living expenses.
- Assisting promising students to become doctorate degree holders who are ready for a variety of diverse and important careers

■ **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 - Vice President and Executive Director for Education

■ **Project Period**

From AY2021 to AY2026*

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

1. Applicants, number of hires, application period:

(1-1) Application Category A

Course	Target	Number of Students Recruited	Support Period
Doctoral Program (区分制の博士後期課程)	2025/4 and 2024/10 1st year enrollees	About 177 students	From AY2025 to AY2027 (3 years)
3 rd year of PhD course (3年制博士課程)	2025/4 and 2024/10 1st year enrollees		Students enroll in October 2024 or students who 2.5 years left in their period of study: April 2025 to September 2027 (2.5 years)
Enrolled in the Doctoral Course 一貫 制博士課程 (Medical Sciences not included)	2025/4 and 2024/10 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 period of study.		
Medical Sciences	2025/4 1st year enrollees		From AY2025 to AY2028 (4 years)

* To continue this program, a new application will be reviewed each year. Even if the student's period of study is extended due to a leave absence, etc., the program period will not change.

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.

* Please note that new applications for the fields covered by "University Fellowship Establishment Program (Fellowship)*" will no longer be accepted from 2025 onwards.

* "University Fellowship Establishment Program for Science and Technology Innovation Creation" (implemented by the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) until the academic year 2023)

(1-2) Application Category B

Students enrolled in the following as of April 2025

Course	Target	Number of Students Recruited	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 period of study.	About 41 students	From AY2025 to AY2026 (2 years)
3 rd year of PhD course (3年制博士課程)			Students who 1.5 years left in their period of study:
Enrolled in the Doctoral Course 一貫	Students who have passed the mid-term		

制博士課程 (Medical Sciences not included)	exams etc., and who 2 years or 1.5 years left in their period of study.		April 2025 to September 2026 (1.5 years)
Medical Sciences	Students who have 2 or 3 years left in their period of study.		

* To continue this program, a new application will be reviewed each year. Even if the student's period of study is extended due to a leave absence, etc., the program period will not change.

(1-3) Application Category C

Students enrolled in the following as of April 2025

Course	Target	Number of Students Recruited	Support period
Doctoral Program (区分制の博士後期課程)	Students who have 1 year left in their period of study.	About 34 students	From April 2025 to March 2026 (1 years)
3 rd year of PhD course (3年制博士課程)			
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 1 year left in their period of study.		
Medical Sciences	Students who have 1 year left in their period of study.		

* The student's period of study is extended due to a leave absence, etc., the program period will not change.

(1-4) Required Documents

① Research Plan for Students Eligible for Research Incentive Funds

[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 For those who were enrolled in the University with the Special Selection of Working Individuals, those who were employed at the time of admission, and those who are in "the early completion program for working people", please attach some form of documentation showing the income earned during the previous year such as the tax withholding slip (源泉徴収票) etc.

2. Students who are not Eligible (no matter the category)

Those who apply to the following conditions are **NOT ELIGIBLE** to apply for this project in 2025:

- ① The research fellows of the program “Research Fellowship for Young Scientists” (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science)
- ② The recipients of MEXT Scholarship
- ③ The recipients of the scholarship granted by the government of their home countries
- ④ Those who have received a sufficient level of scholarship (more than 2.4 million yen/year) related to living expenses.
- ⑤ Those who work for a company and receive a sufficient and stable level of income for living expenses (more than 2.4 million yen/year)*
- ⑥ Those who are on “Leave of Absence” as of April 2025
- ⑦ Individuals who are enrolled beyond the standard period of study

*However, it shall not prevent that students to engage in TA/RA (including RA of JST “Fusion Oriented Research for disruptive Science and Technology (SOHATSU)” project) activities under appropriate supervision and within the scope that does not interfere with their own research activities, and to receive appropriate compensation for this.

3. Application Requirements

- Highly motivated students who are keen on developing their career path
- Those who aim to work hard and productively in unique and interdisciplinary research studies that can contribute SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals)
- Those 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

4. Fellowship Amount

Class 1. Particularly promising students (aprx.25% out of recipients):

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

Class 2. Promising 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.

5. 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.

<https://u-rad.sec.tsukuba.ac.jp>

【筑波大学】2025 年度春 博士後期課程学生支援プロジェクト SPRING & BOOST

<AY 2025 Spring> Support for Pioneering Research Initiated by the Next Generation (SPRING) & Next-Generation AI Innovative Human Resource Development (BOOST)

https://u-rad.sec.tsukuba.ac.jp/login/index.php?support_id=aBMVSVWU686PZlxt1Dcm0w%3D%3D

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

6. Submission Period

April 8 (Tue), 2025 to April 14 (Mon), 2025 *Late applications cannot be accepted.

7. 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, so everyone must register with "JGRAD".
- 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

8. 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.

9. Others

- (1) All recipients have the duty of giving their recent career reports. The University is expected to report follow-up of the recipients for more than 10 years.
- (2) The selection results (the recipient of fellowship) will be disclosed on the University website.
- (3) Research Incentive Fund (equivalent to living expenses) as of a part of the fellowship, will be considered miscellaneous income. Therefore, it will be necessary to declare it in the following year.

[References]

- (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.

10. Contact Information

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