

**GUIDELINES FOR JAPANESE GOVERNMENT (MEXT) SCHOLARSHIP FOR 2026
YOUNG LEADERS' PROGRAM (YLP) STUDENTS**

YEAR-LONG SCHEDULE (PRELIMINARY)

SCHEDULE	
2025	
August	Applications for YLP opened.
By Mid October	Qualified Institutions recommend candidates to the Embassy of Japan with necessary documents.
2026	
From January to February	The Japanese universities conduct first screening.
March	The YLP Committee in MEXT conducts second screening.
April	MEXT notifies the institutions of the results through the Embassy of Japan.
August-September	MEXT provides airline tickets to the grantees through the Embassy of Japan.
September-October	Students arrive in Japan.

*Note: This schedule is preliminary. Detailed schedules will be announced separately through the Embassy of Japan in your country.

I INFORMATION CONCERNING RECRUITMENT OF STUDENTS

1 Number of Scholarship Recipients

In YLP there are five courses, and each course will accept 10 to 20 students in total. Available courses vary by country.

Depending on the situation of the Japanese Government's budget, the number of students to be accepted and the scholarship conditions could differ from those described in the Application Guidelines of each course.

2 Important Points on Eligibility Requirements and Application Procedures

- (1) Applicants must have graduated with excellent grades from a university and be able to study at a Japanese university for one year.
- (2) Applicants must meet all qualifications and requirements stated in the Application Guidelines of each course. The requirements must be observed strictly, and any personal exceptions will not be allowed.
- (3) The number of grantees is limited, and all candidates will be evaluated comparatively. Therefore, candidates who meet all qualifications still might not be selected. (It is also possible that none of the candidates from your institution will be selected.) Please take this point into consideration when recommending candidates.
- (4) Some students in the past returned to their respective home countries without completing the program due to mental or physical problems. In addition, some students required long-term treatment because they had come to Japan without completely curing infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, hepatitis, typhus, malaria, dysentery, and so on. With due consideration given to the fact that the students will be staying for a long period in a country with a very different environment from that in the home country, please make very sure of the student's medical condition (including past medical history), and try to ensure that any student with an illness requiring treatment receives such treatment before coming to Japan.
- (5) Military personnel or military civilian employees at the time of their arrival in Japan and/or during the period of the payment of the scholarship are not eligible.
- (6) Make sure applicants are not applying for another program for which scholarship payments will begin in fiscal year 2026 through the Japanese government, including the Project for Human Resource Development Scholarship (former Japanese Grant Aid for Human Resource Development Scholarship (JDS)).

3 Notification Method

Each institution can decide how to notify students about this Scholarship. However, the notification should be done in the most effective way in order to ensure that outstanding students will apply for the Scholarship.

Application Guidelines may be obtained from the Embassy of Japan or can be downloaded from MEXT's website.

<https://www.mext.go.jp/en/policy/education/highered/title02/detail02/sdetail02/sdetail02/1374094.htm>

In addition, applicants should be instructed to seek information about the universities offering YLP courses through websites of each university. (Please see the Application Guidelines of each course for the relevant URLs.)

4 Acceptance of Application Forms

Please make sure that applicants observe the application deadline strictly and submit all the necessary documents with the letter of recommendation issued by the institution itself (including required copies of documents). The recommending institution must verify whether all application forms are completed correctly and not lacking any necessary documents. Please accept the application forms only when any necessary corrections are made by the applicants. When accepting the applications, please make particularly sure of the following points.

(1) Language and translations

Documents should be filled out or written in English. Attach an English translation if they are written in another language.

(2) Documents to be submitted

(a) Application form

(i) The prescribed forms for this year must be used for application. Please fill out the forms clearly (especially the applicant's name) and put the application form and all other necessary documents for each applicant together into one envelope.

(ii) In the column for 'Educational Background', please write the names of the schools or institutions that the applicant attended in the spaces for 'Elementary Education', 'Secondary Education' and 'Higher Education' which correspond to the Japanese education system of 'Elementary Education - Elementary School', 'Secondary Education - Lower/Upper Secondary School' and 'Higher Education - Undergraduate/Graduate school'.

*Note: Please write the exact number of years that the applicant was enrolled in each institution. If an applicant skipped a year in any school or institution, it must be mentioned.

(b) Certified grade transcripts for each academic year

Certified transcripts of the grades earned by the applicant in all the subjects studied for each academic year at the student's undergraduate and/or graduate schools are required. (A degree certificate or a graduation certificate simply showing the ranking of the applicant at graduation will not substitute for academic transcripts. The transcripts must show the grade-scale applied.) If the transcript is not duplicable, a certified true copy of the original transcript should be submitted. Every year there are many cases in which the original transcripts are not attached or the submitted copies are not verified. Please read the Application Guidelines carefully.

(c) Recommendation letters

Please make sure to issue recommendation letters from your institution for the applicant. There are many cases in which such letters are not attached. In the letters, there should be included a detailed description of the applicant's personality, academic ability, motivation for studying in Japan and the Japanese language, and experience of study abroad.

For the 'Recommendation Letter from the applicant's direct superior at work' and the 'Recommendation Letter from the applicant's superior at work or supervising professor at the university', only those written on the prescribed forms will be accepted. Please make sure that applicants submit both of the letters.

(d) Certificate of health

Applicants must use the prescribed form and have the doctor fill out all items in the form. Recommending institutions must choose medical institutions for the physical examination.

In the past, some students were affected by illnesses such as tuberculosis and mental disorders after arriving in Japan even though they were certified as having no history of such illnesses in their medical certificates. Please take this fact into account when interviewing and examining applicants. Please also mention in the recommendation letter if there are applicants with disabilities who need special care to study in Japan. If there is a change in the health condition of an applicant (including any major changes relating to their life plan) after the applicant has submitted his/her health certificate, please promptly provide this information with the Embassy of Japan located in the applicant's country of nationality since it concerns the acceptance system of the accepting university and Japanese medical institutions.

(e) Graduation certificate (English translation must be attached)

A graduation certificate from graduate and/or undergraduate schools must be submitted. Every year there are many cases in which the original certificates are not attached or the submitted copies are not certified. Please read the Application Guidelines carefully.

(f) An essay of 3 pages explaining reason for application and future plans

An essay within 3 pages must be submitted. In the essay the reason for application and the applicant's future plans after the completion of YLP must be explained concisely and concretely.

(g) Certificate of English proficiency

Every year there are many cases of certificates of English proficiency not being submitted. Please make sure that applicants submit them.

(3) Document numbering

The Application Guidelines require applicants to write the document number in the upper right-hand corner of the documents. In case the document numbers are not indicated by applicants, the recommending institution should indicate the numbers on the documents accordingly.

(4) Incomplete application documents

Application documents not completed fully and correctly or lacking necessary documents will not be accepted. If applicants cannot get any of the necessary documents because of the circumstances in their home countries, such documents could be substituted by the ones certified to be true by the issuing authority, the government in their home countries or the Embassy of Japan.

5 Applicants Staying in Japan

Recommending institutions can decide whether they will permit in exceptional cases applications from people already staying in Japan, but it should be noted that applicants living in their home countries have priority over such people. However, those who have been currently enrolled in a Japanese university with a status of residence of "Student" and those who are enrolled or scheduled to be enrolled as a privately financed international student during the period from the beginning of the application period to the beginning of the scholarship payment are not eligible.

II SELECTION OUTLINE

The candidates to be recommended to MEXT through the Embassy of Japan and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan should be selected in accordance with the following method and criteria.

1 Method of Selection

Each recommending institution can use a selection method decided at their own discretion, but they are asked to examine accurately each applicant's English ability, personality, reasons for applying, etc. in full consideration of the objectives and characteristics of each course.

2 Criteria for Selection

Candidates must meet the following criteria along with the required qualifications:

- (1) Candidates must have excellent grades and have the ability to study the major course they wish to pursue;
- (2) Candidates must be physically and mentally healthy (Special attention should be paid to those with pre-existing conditions such as mental disorders, malaria, tuberculosis, diabetes, hepatitis, etc., as they often develop such conditions after coming to Japan.);
- (3) Candidates must have a verifiable identity;
- (4) Candidates must be able to easily adapt to an unfamiliar environment and a different culture;

- (5) Candidates must have a rich international cultural understanding;
- (6) Candidates must not have Japanese nationality or dual nationality between his/her country and Japan;
- (7) Candidates must not be military personnel or military civilian employees;
- (8) Candidates must not be currently enrolled in a Japanese university with a visa status of “Student” or enrolled or scheduled to be enrolled as a privately financed international student during the period from the beginning of application to the beginning of the scholarship payment;

Please do not recommend applicants who obviously will have difficulty in continuing their studies for the required period of time after coming to Japan (e.g., those who have to do military service, etc.).

III RECOMMENDATION OUTLINE

The nomination of candidates should be made by the recommending institution with their completed application documents by the date designated by the Embassy of Japan. It is the responsibility of the recommending institution to ensure that all necessary documents are provided by the deadline.

In case some of the necessary documents are lacking and need to be submitted later, please make sure to confirm the deadline with the Embassy of Japan. If the document is not submitted by the deadline, or cannot be expected to be ready, the application will be considered as “unaccepted” (impossible to recommend).

IV SELECTION AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULT

1 First Screening

The candidates who are recommended by each recommending institution are selected by the universities offering YLP courses in the First Screening. The selection will be based on the submitted documents and a face-to-face or telephone/online interview. The universities will recommend candidates to the YLP committee established in MEXT, based on the results of the First Screening.

2 Second Screening

The YLP committee conducts the Second Screening for the candidates recommended by the universities.

3 Announcement of Results

After the Second Screening process, the final selection results will be notified to each recommending institution through the Embassy of Japan. The recommending institutions then notify the results to their candidates, and confirm with the successful candidates their intention to enroll at the accepting university by submitting a Pledge in the designated format from the candidate to the Embassy of Japan.

4 No objection is permitted

The recommending institution should explain to the successful candidates that any objection regarding the decision of the host university or course of study will not be accepted when notifying them of the results.

5 In Case of Withdrawal

If a candidate expresses an intention or wish to withdraw from this program, the recommending institution should confirm the reason for withdrawal and contact the Embassy of Japan with a letter from the candidate containing the reason for the withdrawal and his/her signature. The withdrawal will be notified to the accepting university via the Embassy of Japan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and MEXT.

6 Waiting List

When the number of successful candidates is less than the prescribed number because of withdrawals etc., there is a possibility that candidates on the Waiting List will additionally be accepted for Selection. The candidates to be put on the Waiting List will be chosen by the YLP committee during the Second Screening, and the YLP committee will not choose any more candidates after the Second Screening.

The accepting university will contact the successful candidates on the Waiting List to confirm their intention to enroll at the university. Once confirmed, the official result will be notified to the recommending institution via the Embassy of Japan.

V PROCEDURES AFTER SELECTION

In order to prevent various problems after arrival in Japan caused by grantees with insufficient knowledge or misunderstanding of procedures, the following points, in particular, should be fully informed to all selected students. If there are any questions about procedures after selection, please make an inquiry to the Embassy of Japan.

1 Visa Issuance

A ‘Student’ visa will be issued by the Embassy of Japan in each grantee’s country to the grantee upon his/her application for visa issuance.

2 Airline Ticket

- (1) MEXT stipulates the travel schedule and route, and provides the grantee via the Embassy of Japan an economy-class airline ticket for the flight from the international airport closest to the grantee’s residence (in principle, the country of nationality) to Narita International Airport or any other international airport used on the normal route to the accepting university. In principle, the address in the country of the grantee’s nationality stated in the application form shall be recognized as his/her “residence.” However, if it is certain that the address stated in the form will be changed at the time of departure from his/her country, the new address within his/her home country will be regarded as his/her “residence”.
- (2) The provided airline ticket has a fixed date and flight number. Even if it is a transit point, staying for purposes such as visiting relatives or acquaintances, sightseeing, tours, or research during your journey to Japan is not permitted.
- (3) The departure date and flight are fixed taking into account hotel arrangements at a stopover location, flight transfer circumstances, arrival procedures, and residency arrangements. Therefore, change of the ticket date by the grantee is not permitted.
- (4) The provided airline ticket cannot be transferred to another person, nor can it be exchanged for money. Furthermore, the grantee shall bear at his/her own expense all costs related to domestic travel from the grantee’s residence to the nearest international airport, airport taxes, airport usage fees, special taxes necessary for travel, travel expenses within Japan (including airline transit costs), travel insurance expenses, carry-on luggage or unaccompanied baggage expenses, etc.
- (5) The airline ticket will only be provided for the grantee. Family members or others who may accompany the grantee to Japan will not receive any travel expenses or other funds.

3 Date of Arrival in Japan

- (1) The arrival period designated by the accepting university will be a period within two weeks before and after the starting date of the course.
- (2) If the grantee intends to arrive in Japan before the arrival period designated by the university, the scholarship for that month will not be paid. In addition, if the student is enrolled after the second day of the month, the student should be informed that the scholarship will not be paid for that month.
- (3) The airline ticket will not be provided to any grantees who intend to come to Japan before/after the date designated by MEXT without permission, and there will be no refund after arrival. The grantee will be treated as a student of this program only after the arrival date designated by MEXT. Therefore, if a grantee intends to come to Japan before the designated date, he/she must bear the responsibility for travel arrangements, entrance procedures and living arrangements after arrival.
- (4) In principle, the change of grantee’s arrival date and flight will not be permitted. However, if any change is required due to unavoidable circumstances for the grantee, please contact MEXT through the Embassy of Japan. In such a case, the grantee must wait for the contact from MEXT after all the procedures including residence arrangements, etc., are rescheduled. In Japan, all courses will begin right after the arrival period. In case of an arrival delay, there is a possibility that the acceptance to this program will be revoked.
- (5) If the travel agency demands payment for the difference of the flight fee due to any departure or flight changes made by the grantee without permission and if the grantee pays at the moment of departure, no refund will be given after arrival. Therefore, when any changes occur, please contact the Embassy of Japan to find out the necessary procedures before departure.

4 Withdrawal or Revocation of Acceptance

- (1) If a grantee cannot arrive in Japan within the designated arrival period, it will be a great hindrance to the grantee’s education at the university as well as the research program. In this case, the acceptance to this program might be revoked.
- (2) If a grantee withdraws from the program after receiving the airline ticket, MEXT will collect it through the travel agency.
- (3) If a recommending institution has many grantees that withdraw from this program or return to their home country due to personal reasons in the middle of the program, the institution’s participation as a recommending institution may be reconsidered. Therefore, when recommending candidates, please make sure to guide them not to withdraw from the program except in unavoidable circumstances.

5 Students Accompanied by Family Members

If a grantee wishes to be accompanied by his/her family members, the recommending institution must ask the grantee to inform the accepting university of this before departure. The recommending institution must make sure that the applicant checks the application guidelines for the course to which he/she is applying in advance, and if necessary, consults and confirms with the accepting university in advance even before the selection has been made. The grantee must be informed that there will be no increase of the scholarship and no allowances or subsidies for travel, living in Japan, or medical expenses for accompanying family members.

Immigration procedures for the family members will be completely different from those for the grantee. Therefore, please make sure to ask the Embassy of Japan about necessary procedures to obtain appropriate visas for the family members before departure.

6 Guidance before Departure Date

When the Embassy of Japan holds an orientation session before departure, the recommending institution must inform the grantees to participate in the orientation.

7 Unavoidable Circumstances

In the event of unavoidable or unforeseen circumstances, the Japanese Government reserves the right to change or cancel the arrival date, scholarship, and contents of the application guidelines herewithin, at any time before or after notification of the results of the final selection.

Unavoidable Circumstances are defined as events whose effects could not reasonably be prevented or controlled by MEXT or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (including Embassies and Consulates General of Japan) including but not limited to acts of God, acts of government (including local governments, hereafter referred to as “government”), acts of government authorities (including limitations on travel or immigration enacted by the Japanese government or other foreign countries’ governments due to the outbreak of infectious disease), compliance with law, regulations or orders, fire, flooding and torrential rain, earthquakes, acts of war (regardless of a declaration of war), revolt, revolution or rebellion, strike, or lockout.