Joint Japan/World Bank Graduate Scholarship Program (JJ/WBGSP)

2027 APPLICATION GUIDELINES FOR JJ/WBGSP SCHOLARSHIP FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRY NATIONALS

WINDOW 1 PROGRAMS

Updated August 2026

***ATTENTION!** These Guidelines are not valid for applicants who are Japanese nationals. For more information on the JJ/WBGSP application guidelines for Japanese nationals, please visit:* https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/scholarships/japanese-nationals

I. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

To have a JJ/WBGSP application reviewed, applicants must fulfill the following two requirements:

1. **Meet Eligibility Criteria:** The applicant must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Be a national of a World Bank member country listed in Annex 1 of these Guidelines.
- Not be a dual citizen of any developed country.
- On or after the date of the call for scholarship applications opens, not be an Executive Director, his/her alternate, and/or staff of any type of appointment (including temporary and consultant) of the World Bank Group (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, International Development Association, International Finance Corporation, Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency, and International Center for Settlements of Investment Disputes); or not be a close relative of the aforementioned by blood or adoption with the term "close relative" defined as: Mother, Father, Sister, Half-sister, Brother, Half-brother, Son, Daughter, Aunt, Uncle, Niece, or Nephew.
- Hold a bachelor's degree (or equivalent university degree) earned at least three years before the date of the application deadline.
- Be employed in development-related work in a paid full-time position at the time of submitting the scholarship application. Have at least three years of paid development-related employment since earning a bachelor's degree (or equivalent university degree) and acquired within the past six years from the date of the Application Deadline. Please see FAQs on how to count qualified part-time employment toward this 3-year requirement. Please see Annex 2 for a suggested list of development-related topics. Nationals from a fragile and/or conflict-affected country are also required to upload proofs of their successive employments but we do take into consideration the limited employment opportunities in FCS countries listed in Annex 3.
- On or before the scholarship application deadline date, have been admitted unconditionally (except for funding) for the upcoming academic year to at least one of the JJ/WBGSP Participating Programs and located outside of the applicant's country of citizenship and country of residence.

Notes:

- *It is up to the Applicant to determine if she/he is eligible given her/his circumstances. The JJ/WBGSP Secretariat will not make that determination for you.*

- *Individuals currently studying in a JJ/WBGSP Participating Program are NOT eligible to receive a JJ/WBGSP scholarship.*

2. **Submit One Online Application:** An application will be accepted and reviewed if the applicant submits only one completed application electronically through the online application site by the **Application Deadline: February 26, 2027 (for Window 1 programs only).** An application is considered complete if it includes:

   a. **Two recommendation letters**, submitted online, from people who have direct knowledge of the applicant's professional work experience.

   and

   b. **One completed Application Form** (which includes an applicant's agreement to conditions stated on the Signature Page of the Application Form) that is written in either in English or the language of their master's degree program. (For example, a completed Application Form written in French by an applicant who is seeking a scholarship to attend a preferred university in the United Kingdom will not be reviewed).

   Among other information, completing the Application Form includes uploading scanned copies of:

   (i) documentation that proves the applicant meets the eligibility requirement with regard to the number of years of recent development-related work. (See FAQs for details regarding the extent and type of documentation required to be uploaded)

   (ii) the applicant's bachelor's degree diploma, and if applicable, also the diploma of the applicant's most advanced graduate degree. (Do not include a transcript or upload a transcript as a substitute for a diploma).

   (iii) C.V. using the format provided in Annex 4 and written in English or the language of the master's degree program for which the applicant is seeking JJ/WBGSP funding. If the work was not paid, do not include it in your CV. Instead, you can create a category "Volunteer Work" in your CV and list under that heading unpaid internships or other unpaid work.

   (iv) unconditional (except for financing) Letter of Admission for the upcoming academic year to the JJ/WBGSP participating master's program:
   - which is among those listed on the JJ/WBGSP website;
   - for which the applicant is seeking JJ/WBGSP funding; and
   - that is located outside of the applicant's country of citizenship and country of residence.

   (See Annex 5 for greater clarity with regard to what is meant by "unconditional".)

ATTENTION:

- You can draft but DO NOT SUBMIT a JJ/WBGSP scholarship application UNTIL YOU UPLOAD AN UNCONDITIONAL LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE from a participating master's degree program.

- *For either (i) or (ii), if document(s) are not in English, they must be translated into English. Both the document in the original language and the translated document must be uploaded into the application form. The translation does not need to be certified. Applicants and recommenders can use a free online tool to translate words into English, without penalty for doing so. Paying for a certified translation is NOT required.*

Notes:

- *The link to the online application form will only be communicated by JJ/WBGSP Participating Programs to the applicants they have shortlisted as eligible.*

- *DO NOT USE A CELL PHONE TO APPLY, AS THE SOFTWARE IS DESIGNED ONLY TO BE ACCESSED BY A COMPUTER.*

- *An applicant that delivers an application (or any component of an application) in-person, by fax, email or postal mail, or starts an online application before the call for applications opens will be disqualified.*

- *Individuals who submit more than one application will be disqualified.*

- *If an applicant is accepted unconditionally (except for financing) to more than one JJ/WBGSP participating master's degree program, the applicant must decide before submitting his/her scholarship application which of the master's degree he/she seeks JJ/WBGSP funding for. If an applicant is selected for a JJ/WBGSP scholarship, he/she will not be able to transfer the scholarship to another master's degree program.*

Guidance on Professional Recommendation Process:

The applicant can have only two professional recommendations – one is not sufficient and three or more is not permitted.

The recommendations must be from people who can attest from direct observation to your professional qualifications regarding development-related work that was demonstrated after earning your bachelor's degree. We suggest, but do not require, that professional

recommendations be from people who have recent (within the last six years) experience with you in such a professional setting. We suggest, but do not require, that at least one of the two required professional recommendations be from a current or former supervisor.

Unless you are a citizen from a country on our Fragile States list (see Annex 3), both professional recommendations must come from people you worked with you during and in the context of paid employment. For example, unless you are a citizen from a country on our Fragile States list, a recommendation from an applicant's volunteer work is not considered "professional" and hence would not fulfill this eligibility criterion. And for example, unless you are a citizen from a country on our Fragile States list, a recommendation from a professor you are collaborating with on a research project / paper, but not being paid for that work, would not fulfill this eligibility criterion. **PLEASE NOTE: For all applicants, whether from a fragile state or non- fragile state country, recommendations from professors/lecturers based on your time as a student do not qualify as a professional recommendation.**

To fulfill the required two professional recommendations, **complete and submit the Recommendation Request Form in the online application.** We suggest you first get the agreement from your recommender that he/she is willing to provide a recommendation and confirm their email address.

The Recommendation Request Form requires the applicant to identify the name, email address, and the recommender's relationship to the applicant, for each of the two recommenders. Use of personal email addresses, for example gmail, yahoo, and other similar email addresses, is permissible if there is no available email address from the recommender's institution. If a personal email is used, the JJ/WBGSP Secretariat may verify the professional association of your recommender as part of our review process. It is the applicant's sole responsibility to make sure the email contact information provided in the Recommendation Request Form is accurate.

Please Note:

- *Applicants must submit the Recommendation Request Form before submitting the Application Form.*

- *The JJ/WBGSP Secretariat suggests that an applicant first confirms with each recommender that she/he is willing to provide a recommendation and confirm her/his email address.*

- *The JJ/WBGSP Secretariat recommends that applicants submit the Recommendation Request Form as early as possible to give enough time for their recommenders to meet the application deadline. If the recommenders do not submit their recommendations following the instructions you provided to them and by the application deadline date, the application won't be reviewed. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure his/her recommenders meet the application deadline.*

- *The applicant is not permitted to draft any part of a recommendation letter on behalf of the recommender.*

The recommender will be notified by email that you have asked him/her to provide a recommendation and will be instructed to submit the recommendation in English

electronically to the JJ/WBGSP Secretariat by the application deadline.

The system-generated email is usually sent to the recommender within five minutes of the applicant submitting the Recommendation Request Form. If the recommender does not receive the email, please ask him/her to check his/her junk/spam mail folders for an email from **Donotreply_scholarships@worldbank.org**

Please make sure your follow-up with your recommender(s) if any of your recommendations hasn't been received as we get closer to the application deadline. If the two recommendations are not submitted on the portal by the application deadline, your application will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed.

II. INQUIRIES FROM APPLICANTS

Please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) available on the JJ/WBGSP website, for any questions regarding the online application, the application process, and troubleshooting technical problems or other information presented on our website. On a as needed basis, the FAQs will be updated regularly and posted on our website during the call for applications.

If the answer to your question is not in the FAQs or in these Guidelines, you may submit your inquiry in English or French by email to: scholarshipapplicants@worldbank.org and under these conditions, you can expect a response in English within three business days. For technical problem inquiries, if at all possible, please include in your email a screenshot of the technical problem you encounter. **Note: Do not send inquiries to the company hosting the application software.**

Under no circumstances will the JJ/WBGSP Secretariat reply to any email inquiries pertaining to information already presented via our website, so please read all the documentation carefully. If we do not reply to your inquiry within three business days, that means we will not answer your email because the answer to your inquiry is available by reading information already posted on our website.

ATTENTION: We do not guarantee we will reply to ANY email received less than three business days before the application deadline. Because the application process is lengthy, the JJ/WBGSP Secretariat recommends that applications be submitted at least one week ahead of the deadline to avoid any last-minute issues.

III. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE SCHOLARSHIP

After you submit your completed application, it will go through a multi-step selection process, described in the "Selection Process" section of the JJ/WBGSP website. For those applicants notified in March 2026 of their status as a finalist, the JJ/WBGSP Secretariat will request and require the following additional information:

1. **Identification:** When the JJ/WBGSP Secretariat offers a scholarship, the finalist will be requested to submit a scanned copy of the identification page of his/her passport , or in case the applicant lacks a valid passport, he/she can provide another acceptable legal document (birth or marriage certificate), with the name IDENTICAL to the one submitted on the

Application Form to the JJ/WBGSP Secretariat within three business days from the time the JJ/WBGSP Secretariat offers the scholarship.

2. **Medical Certificate:** After the JJ/WBGSP Secretariat offers a scholarship, and at least 21 days before traveling to the host university to commence the master program, the finalist will be requested to submit a scanned copy of a health certificate. This certificate must be less than three months old from the start date of their master's program and must be from a medical doctor stating the scholar is in good health to travel and study.

Please note: Failure to provide these two documents on time will result in disqualification.

ATTENTION! Recipients of the JJ/WBGSP scholarship who were admitted to a university in the United States are required to travel to the US on a J-1 Visa. The World Bank will rescind the JJ/WBGSP scholarship if the scholar enters the United States by any other means.

ANNEX 1: 2027 LIST OF ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES

To be eligible for a JJ/WBGSP scholarship, the applicant must be a citizen of one or more of the countries listed below:

Afghanistan
Angola
Bangladesh
Belize
Benin
Bhutan
Bolivia
Burkina Faso
Burundi
Cambodia
Cameroon
Cape Verde
Central African Republic
Chad
Comoros
Congo, Dem. Rep.
Congo, Rep.
Côte d'Ivoire
Djibouti
Dominica
Egypt, Arab Rep.
Eritrea
Eswatini
Ethiopia
Fiji
The Gambia
Ghana
Grenada
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Haiti
Honduras
India
Iraq
Kenya
Kiribati
Kosovo
Kyrgyz Republic
Lao PDR
Lebanon
Lesotho
Liberia

Libya
Madagascar
Malawi
Maldives
Mali
Marshall Islands
Mauritania
Morocco
Mozambique
Myanmar
Namibia
Nepal
Nicaragua
Niger
Nigeria
Pakistan
Papua New Guinea
Rwanda
São Tomé and Principe
Senegal
Sierra Leone
Solomon Islands
Somalia
South Sudan
St Lucia
St Vincent and the Grenadines
Sudan
Suriname
Syrian Arab Republic
Tajikistan
Tanzania
Timor-Leste
Togo
Tonga
Tunisia
Tuvalu
Uganda
Ukraine
Uzbekistan
Vanuatu
Venezuela
West Bank and Gaza
Yemen, Republic of
Zambia
Zimbabwe

ANNEX 2: SUGGESTED LIST OF DEVELOPMENT-RELATED TOPICS

FINANCE, COMPETITIVENESS AND INNOVATION

- Financial Stability & Integrity
- Financial Inclusion & Access
- Firms, Entrepreneurship & Innovation
- Markets, Technology & Digital Economy
- Long-Term Finance
- Climate & Risk Management

GOVERNANCE

- Strengthening Public Policy Processes
- Promoting Effective Resource Management
- Reinforcing Public Service Delivery
- Tax Administration and Tax Policy
- Strengthening the Public-Private Interface
- Understanding the Underlying Drivers and Enablers of Policy Effectiveness

MACROECONOMICS, TRADE AND INVESTMENT

- Designing and applying country-based diagnostics, development strategies, policy analysis and other analytical products for decision-making by Ministries of Finance, Trade, Economy and Production in their pursuit of reform agendas conducive to strengthening inclusive growth led by the private sector

POVERTY REDUCTION AND EQUITY/SHARED PROSPERITY

- Identifying key constraints that limit opportunities for productive employment, capital accumulation and investment in human capital by the poor and vulnerable households.
- Using data on poverty, equity and welfare for evidence-based public policy making and implementation
- Designing and implementing fiscal and social policies that can enhance the capacity of those at the bottom to contribute more actively to economic growth
- Developing and adopting effective risk management strategies and systems that contribute to sustainable poverty reduction and shared prosperity

EDUCATION

- For primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education: devise practical solutions for issues related to design of curricula, curriculum reform, instruction and pedagogy, and learning/measurement of learning,
- Organize, strengthen and manage an education system, and the delivery of services,
- Designing and implementing cost-effective and sustainable Early Childhood Development interventions
- Managing and developing an effective teacher workforce.
- Designing and applying emerging innovations in the education sector, including but not limited to those enabled by the use of information and communications technologies (ICTs).
- Designing and implementing reforms aimed at improving the effectiveness, equity, and efficiency of country education financing systems.

- Designing and implementing reforms aimed at issues of access related to disability and/or Inclusive Education

GENDER

- Health Sector
- Education Sector
- Social Protection
- Employment
- Ownership and Control of Assets
- Agriculture and Rural Development
- Financial Inclusion
- Enhancing Women's Voice and Agency and Engaging Men and Boys
- Gender-Based Violence

HEALTH, NUTRITION AND POPULATION

- Health Financing
- Public/Global Health
- Nutrition
- Population and Development
- Delivery of Health, Nutrition and Population services work for the poor

SOCIAL PROTECTION AND JOBS

- Skills Development
- Social Insurance and Pension
- Social Safety Nets
- Nexus with Gender
- Social Safety Net Programs' Delivery Systems

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

- Climate Smart Agriculture
- Food Quality
- Rural Livelihoods and Agriculture Employment
- Value Chains and Agribusiness competitiveness and commercialization.

CLIMATE CHANGE

- Energy
- Transport
- Climate-smart Land Use, Water and Food Security
- Finance
- Small Island States Resilience initiatives

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES

- Environmental Economics
- Pollution Management and Environmental Health
- Environmental Standards
- Fisheries
- Forests, Landscapes and Ecosystems
- Watersheds

SOCIAL, URBAN, RURAL & RESILIENCE

- Community-Driven Development
- City Management, Governance and Finance
- Land / GeoSpatial
- Disaster Risk Management
- Social Inclusion
- Social Sustainability and Standards
- Labor Influx and Labor Management
- Stability, Peace and Security
- Sustainable Urban Infrastructure and Services
- Territorial Development and Productivity
- Urban Poverty and Housing

WATER

- Hydropower & Dams
- Water in Agriculture
- Urban Water Supply and Sanitation services delivery
- Rural Water Supply and Sanitation services delivery
- Water Security and Integrated Resource Management
- Water, Poverty and the Economy – policies, institutions, and governance – related to the role of water in an economy
- Social Inclusion in Water

ENERGY & EXTRACTIVES

- Clean Energy
- Energy Access
- Energy Economics, Markets and Institutions
- Extractives Industries
- Hydropower & Dams
- Power Systems

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Infrastructure Management & Finance, including Public Private Partnerships & Guarantees
- Development Corridors & Regional Integration
- Roads
- Air Transport
- Railways
- Transport & Digital Development
- Urban Transport
- Resilient Transport in context of Disaster Risk management

DEVELOPMENT IN CONTEXT OF FRAGILITY, CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE

- Development-Security Nexus
- Humanitarian-Development Nexus
- Design and implementation of development projects in FCV
- Innovative financing mechanisms

ANNEX 3: 2027 LIST OF COUNTRIES WITH FRAGILE AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED SITUATIONS ELIGIBLE FOR A JJ/WBGSP SCHOLARSHIP

Afghanistan
Burkina Faso
Burundi
Cameroon
Central African Republic
Chad
Comoros
Congo, Dem. Rep.
Congo, Rep
Eritrea
Ethiopia
Guinea -Bissau
Haiti
Iraq
Kosovo
Lebanon
Libya
Mali
Marshall Islands
Mozambique
Myanmar
Niger
Nigeria
Papua New Guinea
São Tomé and Príncipe
Solomon Islands
Somalia
South Sudan
Sudan
Syria, Arab Rep.
Timor Leste
Tuvalu
Ukraine
Venezuela, RB
West Bank and Gaza
Yemen, Rep.
Zimbabwe

ANNEX 4: CV TEMPLATE

Instruction: To be completed by the applicant and uploaded In the DOCUMENT SECTION of the Application Form.

NAME OF APPLICANT:_____

SECTION ONE: EMPLOYMENT RECORD AFTER EARNING BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR EQUIVALENT (mandatory)

*Instruction to JJ/WBGSP Applicant: Starting with the most recent first, fill in the following fields for EACH department/unit in an organization that provided you **paid employment** (including paid internship(s)) since completing your bachelor's degree. ONLY If you are a citizen from a Fragile State (listed in Annex 3), you may include non-paid/volunteer work but you must indicate that in section e "Job Title of most recent position."*

a. NAME OF ORGANIZATION:_____

b. NAME OF DEPARTMENT/UNIT:_____

c. START DATE (MONTH/YEAR): _____

d. END DATE: (MONTH/YEAR): _____

e. JOB TITLE OF MOST RECENT POSITION:_____

f. ANSWER YES/NO: WAS THIS POSITION A PROMOTION FROM THE MOST RECENT POSITION YOU HELD AT THIS ORGANIZATION THAT EMPLOYED YOU?:

g. IN BULLET FORMAT, LIST YOUR KEY JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:

h. IN BULLET FORMAT, DESCRIBE WHAT YOU CONSIDER TO BE YOUR MOST IMPORTANT ACCOMPLISHMENT THAT CAN BE UNIQUELY AND DIRECTLY ATTRIBUTED TO YOUR EFFORTS:

i. DESCRIBE OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

SECTION TWO (optional):

*Instruction to JJ/WBGSP Applicant: Below, you may provide any other **types** of information typically found in CVs/Resumes (list of publications, skills, etc.) that you believe may be relevant to assess your scholarship application, and have NOT been presented in other sections of this CV or in another section of the Application Form. Specifically:*

- *D*o NOT provide additional information on EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCES
- *Do NOT provide education details prior to earning your bachelor's degree (or equivalent).*
- *Do NOT provide additional information on education degrees that you present in the EDUCATION SECTION of the application form.*

SECTION THREE: EDUCATION (optional)

Instruction: You may describe your education background AFTER secondary school, but do so only if the information is not already presented in the EDUCATION Section of the application form

ANNEX 5: GUIDANCE FOR LETTERS OF ADMISSION TO JJ/WBGSP PARTICIPATING PROGRAMS

The JJ/WBGSP Secretariat will not answer emails about the issue of eligibility for any given individual's circumstances. This includes the eligibility criteria of being admitted unconditionally (except for financing) to a JJ/WBGSP participating master's Program.

Note: Emails to JJ/WBGSP Secretariat that describe or attach a Letter of Acceptance and ask the Secretariat to determine if its unconditional or not, will not be answered by the Secretariat.

Here are a few clarifying remarks:

A. GUIDANCE FOR IDENTIFYING LETTERS OF ADMISSION TO JJ/WBGSP PARTICIPATING PROGRAMS THAT ARE UNCONDITIONAL

Every JJ/WBGSP master's degree program has a unique way of indicating that an applicant has been admitted to the program without conditions related to non-financial matters. Bearing this in mind, the JJ/WBGSP Secretariat shares the following guidance that will help it determine if a University Letter of Admission submitted by a JJ/WBGSP applicant is unconditional.

Some Letters of Admission that JJ/WBGSP considers unconditional:

- state that the applicant has been admitted to the program, make no mention of any condition, and do not state explicitly that the admission is unconditional
- explicitly state that the admission is unconditional
- explicitly state that "there are no academic conditions relating to this offer" or state that "you have been academically accepted" and then the Letter of Admission proceeds to note financial conditions, such as a required advanced payment "to secure you a place in the class" or evidence that the applicant has secured adequate financing (either self-financed or through a sponsor / scholarship fund)
- explicitly state that "there are no conditions attached to this offer beyond the 'General Conditions for Entry"

Also, for JJ/WBGSP evaluation purposes:

- any conditions pertaining to the securing of a visa or other legal means of entry to the host country, does not make the Letter of Admission conditional for JJ/WBGSP evaluation purposes.
- any conditions pertaining to your academic performance in the first semester or year of the JJ/WBGSP scholarship program does not make the Letter of Admission conditional for JJ/WBGSP evaluation purposes.
- an applicant whose Letter of Admission notes that he/she is required to attend a pre-sessional intensive course offered by the University (either in English, Math or other academic subject) will be considered for a JJ/WBGSP Scholarship. However, for that applicant to become a finalist, the JJ/WBGSP Secretariat will need to receive a confirmation from the university offering the master's program that passing this pre-sessional course is not required for full admission into the regular academic program. This holds to be the case even if the Letter of Admission says the offer is unconditional.

B. EXAMPLES OF UNIVERSITY LETTERS OF ADMISSION THAT ARE CONDITIONAL

The following Letters of Admission are NOT admissible for a JJ/WBGSP scholarship application:

- A Letter of Admission that states explicitly that an applicant is admitted conditionally because certain specified documentation remains outstanding. Sometimes this documentation can include academic transcripts and/or scanned diploma or other proof of prior degree.

- A Letter of Admission that states explicitly that the offer is conditional upon submitting proof of English or other Language Competency (for example a minimum IELTS or TOEFFL score)

Some Letters of Admission indicate the offer is conditional, and then refer to a separate document or an online platform that will provide the applicant the details of the conditionality. In this case, the JJ/WBGSP applicant must include this relevant documentation as part of the Letter of Admission the applicant uploads into the application form, so JJ/WBGSP Secretariat can confirm if the Letter of Admission meets the scholarship application requirements for eligibility.

Some Letters of Admission state that an offer is conditional upon providing a certified academic transcript, "if not already provided." In this case, for that applicant to become a finalist, the JJ/WBGSP will first seek and need to receive confirmation from the JJ/WBGSP master's degree program that the applicant had met this condition by the JJ/WBGSP scholarship application deadline date.