Joint Japan / World Bank Graduate Scholarship Program

Developing Country Nationals applying for a scholarship with a JJ/WBGSP Participating Program in 2027

FAQs for Applications under Window 1

Updated August 2026

TOPIC: WHERE YOU CAN STUDY

Can I receive a JJ/WBGSP scholarship from this call for applications for any master's program I apply to?

No. This call for scholarship applications is only available for studying a master's program granted "Participating Program" status by the JJ/WBGSP Scholarship Program. The list of Participating Programs for 2026 is posted on the JJ/WBGSP website

Universities have many graduate programs, but JJ/WBGSP scholarship applications under this window are only for Participating Programs under Window 1. To be eligible for funding, the name of the master's degree program must be on our listing. If a university's graduate program is not posted on the JJ/WBGSP website as having "participating program" status, you cannot receive a JJ/WBGSP scholarship to attend that graduate program through this call for applications.

Double or dual-degree programs with one of our Participating Programs are not accepted.

Can I receive this scholarship for undergraduate studies, PhD studies, or non-degree graduate studies?

No. This scholarship does not sponsor PhD studies, undergraduate studies, distance learning programs, short-term training, conferences, seminars, thesis writing, or research projects.

If I am currently enrolled in one of the JJ/WBGSP participating master's programs, can I receive a JJ/WBGSP scholarship for this program?

No.

Can I apply this year using a 2026-27 admission letter that was deferred unconditionally to enter the 2027-28 academic year by one of the participating master's program?

Yes. In the application field for uploading the admissions letter, please upload either: (i) the original 2026-27 admission letter that was deferred, and the email or other correspondence from the university that explicitly states that you are unconditionally (except for financing and/or medical certificate) admitted into the 2027-2028 academic year; or (iii) a revised unconditional (except for financing and/or medical certificate) letter of admission to start in the upcoming 2027-2028 academic year.

Can I apply this year using only a 2026-27 unconditional admission letter I received to enter the participating master's program last year?

No.

TOPIC: BENEFITS

Does the scholarship support visa application(s) and related expenses?

No.

Does the scholarship cover costs to bring and support family members during my studies?

No.

Does the JJ/WBGSP Secretariat provide support for or respond to inquiries regarding an applicant's family members wanting to obtain a visa to accompany the scholar while studying abroad?

No.

If I have a different type of visa other than a J-1, or other legal means to enter the US, would I have to comply with the J-1 requirement for your scholars studying in the United States?

Yes

What is the value of the scholarship?

We do not provide this information to applicants. The funding amount depends on several factors, including the length and location of the participating master's degree program.

The university is asking me as an admitted student to make a deposit to secure my spot for enrollment. Will you make this deposit on my behalf?

No, you will need to make the required deposit.

The university is asking me as an admitted student to make a deposit to secure my spot for enrollment. Does this request make my letter of admission "conditional" for the purpose of your evaluation of my scholarship application?

No.

TOPIC: ELIGIBILITY

How can I tell if I meet the eligibility requirements?

It is up to the applicant to assess whether or not he/she is eligible. The eligibility requirements are clearly listed in the Application Guidelines and these FAQs. The JJ/WBGSP Secretariat will not respond to any inquiry that presents an applicants' circumstances (including the type of admissions letter from the university) and requests assistance in assessing the applicant's eligibility.

There are no exceptions made to the eligibility requirements.

I am a citizen of a developing country, but the name of my country is not on the dropdown list of the question in the Application Form that asks for my country of citizenship. Am I still eligible?

No. The nationality criteria for eligibility of a JJWBGSP scholarship is restricted. There are no exceptions made for individual applicants.

Is there a minimum or maximum age limit?

No.

If I submit my application form before I receive a letter of admission from a participating master's degree program, will my application be reviewed?

No, per the materials posted on our website, uploading an unconditional (except for financing and/or medical certificate) letter of admission into the application form is a requirement for eligibility.

If I receive a one-time, one-year deferral of my 2026-27 academic year admission from the university, can I use this documentation to either: (i) defer a 2026 awarded JJWBGSP scholarship to the academic year 2027-28; or (ii) apply for a JJWBGSP scholarship in 2027?

You can only use this documentation to defer a 2026 awarded JJWBGSP scholarship to the academic year 2027-28.

I am currently waitlisted for admission to a participating master's degree program. Is it possible to apply with my current status because the final decision will be released after the JJ/WBGSP scholarship deadline?

No.

If I receive a JJ/WBGSP scholarship to a participating master's degree program, will you honor a request to transfer the JJ/WBGSP scholarship to another participating master's degree program?

No.

Do I have to return home to contribute to my country's development, or can I enroll in a PhD program abroad after JJ/WBGSP funds my master's degree?

Your intent does not preclude you from applying. Your application will be reviewed if you meet the eligibility criteria. You should mention your career plans in the Statement of Purpose.

I have already completed a master's program but meet all the criteria mentioned in the application guidelines. Am I still eligible for a JJ/WBGSP scholarship to pursue another master's degree?

Yes. You can have an earlier master's degree and still apply for a JJ/WBGSP scholarship for another master's degree.

Am I eligible to apply if I have already received funding from the Government of Japan in pursuit of a graduate degree?

Yes.

Am I eligible to apply if I have already been offered a previous JJWBGSP scholarship but declined, or if I have received a previous JJWBGSP scholarship but did not graduate?

No.

Do you make exceptions regarding the required number of years of development-related experience since obtaining a bachelor's degree?

No. No exceptions are made for this or any other eligibility criteria.

I received a medical degree, but not a bachelor's degree. There were two components to earning the medical degree: fulfilling course requirements and undertaking clinical work, and I got my degree after completing both components. Am I eligible if it has been at least three years since I fulfilled my course requirements, but it has not yet been three years since earning the medical degree?

No. You must have three years of development-related work experience after earning your first university degree. Paid work during your medical studies (including paid residency) which was earned prior to receiving your first university degree is not eligible work.

Does work on a master's program count toward the required three years of development-related work, particularly if it was a master's program related to development?

A period of graduate study, even if it was related to development, does not count toward the three years of development-related work requirement.

Can part-time paid work be counted toward meeting the eligibility criteria for development-related experience?

Yes. Please be explicit in your CV and in the application form regarding when and where you worked part-time and indicate the average percentage of time per week you worked. For example, if you worked 50% of the time continuously for six years in a development-related field since earning a bachelor's degree, you have fulfilled the requirement in terms of number of years of employment.

If I am a national from a developing country that <u>is not</u> on the list of Fragile States noted in the Application Guidelines and I am working but I do not have a contract or my employer is not registered as a business, can this work count towards the eligibility requirements?

No.

If I am a national from a developing country that <u>is</u> on the list of Fragile States noted in the Application Guidelines and I am working but I do not have a contract or my employer is not registered as a business, can this work count towards the eligibility requirements?

Yes, if the work is development-related. In your CV, you must specify as much information as possible, but at a minimum you need to specify the employer's name and at least one way to contact him/her (email; phone number) and you must describe the work you do.

If I am a national from a developing country that <u>is not</u> on the list Fragile States noted in the Application Guidelines, can unpaid internships or volunteer/unpaid work (full or part-time) that is development-related be counted toward the employment related requirements for eligibility?

No.

If I am a national from a developing country that <u>is</u> on the list Fragile States noted in the Application Guidelines, can unpaid internships or volunteer/unpaid work (full or part time) that is development-related be counted toward the employment related requirements for eligibility?

Yes. Make sure in your CV that you clearly identify which unpaid internship(s) and volunteer community activities are development-related and distinguish these experiences from any development-related paid work.

Can a paid internship that is development-related be counted toward meeting the eligibility criteria for development-related experience?

Yes.

What should I do if the type of my "development- related" work does not match any of the topics in the dropdown menu in the application form, or if I am not sure if my work constitutes "development-related"?

If none of the options of topics in the application form match your professional experience, but you think it may be development-related, then you must define your development-related topic in the last option: "other please specify." In the review process (and not before), the JJ/WBGSP Secretariat will determine whether or not that topic is development-related.

Does mandatory National Youth Service Corps or any type of military service count towards required years of development-related experience?

No. You can include mandatory community / service corps experience under "volunteer community involvement" only if you note in the "Role/Position" field that it was mandatory.

I applied for a JJ/WBGSP Scholarship in the past but was not selected. Can I apply this year?

Yes, your application will be reviewed if you meet the eligibility criteria

What areas of work are considered development-related?

Equitable Growth, Finance and Institutions

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

  Examples:
  - *The Capital Markets Board, Banking supervision and other government regulatory bodies in support of a sound financial sector;*
  - *public sector officials creating or administering business regulations / licenses, etc.)*
  - *Pension administration / reforms, including targeting informal sector to increase coverage of social security and social protection, helping to reduce dependency ratio and poverty in elderly.*
  - *Consulting firms advising foreign direct investors on local business investment climate / regulatory framework*

- Macroeconomics, Monetary Policy & Fiscal Management, and Trade

  Example:
  - *work in Central Bank, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Trade or Ministry of Planning, applying country-based diagnostics, development strategies, policy analysis and other analytical products for decision-making in their pursuit of reform agendas conducive to strengthening inclusive growth led by the private sector*

- Poverty & Equity

  Examples:
  - *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*

- 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

  Examples:
- *anti-corruption measures as it pertains to public expenditures including accountants / procurement officers working on improving public expenditure processes; and (ii) applicants improving stakeholder participation in development project design and implementation*

  Note: governance related to electoral / political systems is not a development-topic.

Human Development

- Education

  Examples:
  - *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*

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

- Social Protection & Labor
  - Skills Development
  - Social Insurance and Pension
  - Social Safety Nets
  - Nexus with Gender

- Social Safety Net Programs' Delivery Systems

Sustainable Development

- Agriculture
  - Climate Smart Agriculture
  - Food Quality
  - Rural Livelihoods and Agriculture Employment
  - Value Chains and Agribusiness competitiveness and commercialization.
- Environment & Natural Resources
  - Environmental Economics
  - Pollution Management and Environmental Health
  - Environmental Standards
  - Fisheries
  - Forests, Landscapes and Ecosystems
  - Watersheds
- 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
- Social, Urban, Rural & Resilience and Social Inclusion (including Urban Planning)
  - Community-Driven Development
  - City Management, Governance and Finance
  - Land / Geo Spatial
  - 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

Infrastructure

- Digital Development
- Infrastructure Finance, PPPs & Guarantees
- Transport
  - Development Corridors & Regional Integration
  - Roads
  - Air Transport
  - Railways
  - Transport & Digital Development
  - Urban Transport
  - Resilient Transport in context of Disaster Risk management

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

Cross-Cutting

- Fragility, Conflict & Violence
    - Development-Security Nexus
    - Humanitarian-Development Nexus
    - Design and implementation of development projects in FCV
    - Innovative financing mechanisms
- 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
- Climate Change
    - Energy
    - Transport
    - Climate-smart Land Use, Water and Food Security
    - Finance
    - Small Island States Resilience initiatives

Other, which could include:

- Sustainable Tourism
- Humanitarian work (Disaster Risk Management / Disaster Relief; Refugee Assistance)
- Journalism/ Communications informing development agenda
- Human Rights work, but only as they relate to development topics, including disenfranchised segments of society improved access to public services. Human rights related to voting systems / electoral processes is a political, not development topic.
- Monitoring and evaluation work and methodology pertaining to development projects or programs

TOPIC: APPLICATION PROCESS

Can I apply using my mobile phone?

No. The JJ/WBGSP application portal is not configured to be used by a mobile phone. You should use a desktop / laptop computer.

The link to the application is not working. What should I do?

Please refer to the list of browsers supported by the Zengine platform.
It seems that Chrome works best.

Can I apply for a scholarship if I have not yet received an unconditional (except for financing and/or medical certificate) admission letter to one of the participating master's degree programs?

No. At the time you submit a scholarship application, you must have proof of unconditional (except for financing and/or medical certificate) admission to one of our participating programs and the scanned copy of the admission letter needs to be attached in the application.

May I apply to any of the two application windows?

No. Candidates must apply to the window under which their targeted master's program is listed.

Can I complete multiple applications, one for each participating master's degree program for which I am seeking a JJ/WBSP scholarship?

No, you can complete only one application under one window and choose only one participating master's degree program for which you seek JJ/WBGSP funding.

Individuals who submit more than one application will be disqualified

Why isn't my master's program in the drop-down menu in the PARTICIPATING MASTER'S PROGRAM section of the application form?

If the master's program for which you seek JJ/WBGSP funding does not appear in the drop-down menu of "Participating Programs", it is not a program that is eligible for a JJ/WBGSP scholarship.

Can I still apply if I am receiving a partial scholarship from another source for the same master's program I am applying to?

Yes.

TOPIC: RECOMMENDATIONS

Can I submit my application before sending my recommendation requests?

No.
The JJ/WBGSP Secretariat strongly encourages you to select your professional recommenders and send them your recommendation requests as early as possible in your application process in order to give ample time for the recommenders to submit their recommendations before the application deadline. If you submit your application before receiving the two recommendations, you won't be able to verify on the application platform if your recommendations were received.

Can anyone provide a recommendation?

No. Recommenders must be individuals who can attest to your professional experiences at work. If you have had paid employment, it is strongly preferred you seek professional recommendations from people you have worked with during your paid employment. Having at least one recommendation coming from your current or former supervisor is preferred, but not required.

Can a professor I studied under provide a recommendation?

It depends:

Recommendations from professors who know you only in your capacity as a student are not acceptable. For example, if you know a professor because you took his/her course(s), that is not considered a professional relationship. Recommendations from professors/lecturers based on your status as a student do not qualify as a professional recommendation.

If you know a professor because he was your colleague or supervisor at the time you were a hired lecturer at the university, that is a professional relationship. In that instance, the professor can provide a recommendation regarding your professional qualifications / attributes *that he/she has observed*. If the same person also had you as a student, observations from your professor/student relationship cannot be part of the recommendation.

May I give a personal email address for my recommenders?

Yes. You may submit the recommender's gmail, yahoo or other personal email address. The email address you provide must be accessible only by your recommender.

If an institutional email address is available, please use the institutional email address.

Can my recommender share the email requesting their reference with my other recommender?

No. Each recommender will receive an individual email with a unique link to an online reference form he/she must complete. Only his/her reference can be submitted using this link. If the recommender shares the link with other recommenders, his/her reference may be overridden.

Can I draft the recommendation for my recommender, in part or in its entirety?

No. The recommendation must be drafted and submitted by the recommender.

After I submit my recommendation requests, can I change my recommender?

If the Recommender has submitted his/her recommendation, you cannot replace that recommender with another person.

If the recommender has not yet submitted his/her recommendation, you can delete your request for that recommender on the application portal and insert the contact information of the replacement.

TOPIC: QUESTIONS SPECIFIC TO THE APPLICATION FORM

What does "*" ending a question mean?

A "*" next to a question in the online application form indicates that this information is required to complete and submit the application form.

Do I have to complete each question of the application form?

No, only those questions followed by a **"*".**

Can I change any information on my application form (including my email address) after I have submitted it?

No.

I have changed my last name because of getting married, so my documents do not all have the same name. What do I do about that?

In the last question in the Statement of Purpose explain why the name(s) in your uploaded document(s) vary compared to the name you use for the application form.

The ordering of dates (month / day / year) in the application form are different than the custom in my home country, so information given by my references may be different than what is written in the application form.

In the application form and the CV you upload, please conform to the format provided (month / day / year) and (month / year). During the review, we understand information provided by references may use other conventions, e.g. (day / month / year).

Should I consider my legal status as a resident in answering the question: "What has been your main country of residence over the past year?"

Applicants should list the country they have lived in the most over the past year, irrespective of the type of residency status.

How do I complete the" Current Employment" section of the application form if I have more than one current employer?

In the "Current Employment" Section, enter the employer with who you are working the most. In the "Employment History" section, enter the other current employer(s) and indicate that the end-date is scholarship application deadline date. And in the last question in the "Statement Of Purpose", note that you have more than one current employer.

How do I complete the "Country" question about an employer if I travel to many countries for my work?

The country should be the place / station of your employment. For example, if you have a contract with the Inter-Development Bank and your station of employment is the IBRD headquarter office in Washington DC. but in the course of your work you spend most of your time traveling to / going on mission in one or more South American countries, you must respond to the Country question by entering "Other", and in the follow-up question enter "United States." Of course, in your CV and elsewhere in your application, you may specify the countries in South America your work supports.

How do I complete the "Country" question in the "Employment" section if I am/was working on a country, but I am/was based in a different country?

You should enter the country in which you are/were stationed.

What should I do if the country I want to select as my country of employment is not listed?

If the country is not listed on the dropdown menu, choose "other" which is at the end of the list. Which format do I need to use in answering the question: "At the current US exchange rate…"

Enter the amount of funds in the following format: $x
For example, if your response is one thousand dollars, enter: $1000

TOPIC: QUESTIONS ABOUT UPLOADING DOCUMENTS INTO THE APPLICATION FORM

Is there a standard format or guide for naming the files that need to be uploaded in the application portal?

There are no requirements as to how you name the files you upload.

I have uploaded the wrong file. How to delete that so that i can upload the correct file?

If you have not yet submitted your application, from your saved draft application, you can just select a new file and it will overwrite the first one you uploaded. Before you submit your application, we invite to double-check and make sure you uploaded the correct versions of all required documents, in an accepted format/size.

I have more than one diploma/certificate related to my most recent degree. Which one do I upload?

If you have multiple diplomas/ related to your most recent degree, please scan all of the diplomas into one file and upload them all through the online application. An academic transcript cannot be uploaded in place of a diploma/certificate unless the transcript clearly shows the graduation date and degree obtained. A scanned copy of the diploma/certificate you received at the time of graduation is sufficient. You do not have to ask the university for a newly certified copy of the diploma you received.

Should I upload additional documentation of academic performance, such as my transcript or Grade Point Average (GPA)?

No.

Are there any restrictions on the format or number of pages for my CV?

No.
Applicants may consider using the CV format suggested in Annex 4 of the Application Guidelines but this format is optional.

How much employment documentation do I need to submit?

Nationals from a country on the list of fragile states (Annex 3 of the Application Guidelines) who are or have been employed in a manner that helps meet the eligibility requirements for development-related work are required to upload employment documentation demonstrating this relevant employment. If all their development-related work experience is outside the paid workforce, they must upload, under the mandatory employment proof question, a document stating the reasons they can't produce a proof of employment and make sure their CV captures all relevant work experience.

All other applicants are required to upload documentation that provides evidence that they meet the eligibility criteria related to number of years of development-related employment.

Which types of documents from my employer(s) should I upload into the application form as proof(s) of employment(s)?

Valid proofs of current employment include a signed letter from your employer printed on your employer's letterhead and dated within the last three months of the application deadline (so not earlier than November 26, 2026), indicating your start date, current title, and note that you are currently employed by that organization. The letter should be signed by an authority such as the CEO, the head of human resources or your manager. The letter can be addressed to the JJ/WBGSP Secretariat.
A valid proof of prior employment can be a similar letter as described above, with the start and end dates of employment clearly indicated.

If I am self-employed or a founder of an organization in which I work, which types of documentation can I use as proof of this employment?

For proof of self-employment or of being the founder of an organization in which you work, you must upload the government issued document that indicates when the organization (business or non-for-profit) was registered with the government. If the organization is not registered, it is not considered formal employment, and your work in that organization should be listed in the VOLUNTEER page of the application form.

What should I do if I cannot document my employment record because my employer no longer exists?

Please describe this situation in a document that you upload under the mandatory employment proof question. If you are selected as a finalist, we may ask you to produce other corroborating documentation before a scholarship is provided.

How can I upload a scanned copy of my signature onto the Signature Page?

Applicants must type their first and last names in the field for the Signature. Do not attempt to upload a scanned / electronic signature.

If I am required to complete the application form in English, can some or all of my employment documentation and/or the diploma that I will upload into the application form be in French?

Yes, as long as you also upload an English translation of these documents

TOPIC: TROUBLESHOOTING AND COMMUNICATIONS WITH JJ/WBGSP SECRETARIAT

Can I ask JJ/WBGSP Secretariat a question about my application?

Please read carefully all documentation provided, including these FAQs, as the JJ/WBGSP Secretariat will NOT answer any inquiries addressed to Scholarshipapplicants@worldbank.org unless the response cannot be found within the information already provided. See the Application Guidelines for further guidance.

How will I find out if I was awarded the scholarship? How will I find out if I was not awarded the scholarship?

All successful applicants will hear from the JJ/WBGSP Secretariat likely by end of March 2027. Non-selected applicants will also be notified.

One of my recommenders says she/he has not received the email sent from the JJ/WBGSP with my recommendation request. What should I do?

First please verify that the email address you submitted for your recommender on your application is correct, and that you entered the email address alone in the response field without any other text, extra email addresses, or other characters.

Second, please contact your recommender to ensure the system-generated email requesting the recommendation has not gone to another location. Sometimes the email is automatically moved to the junk/spam folder. If the email is associated with an institution, you should also ask your recommender to check if his/her institution imposes any security settings or restrictions to filter or prevent emails from untrusted email addresses to reach his/her Inbox.

Third, if your recommender still cannot find the email, please try to send the recommendation request again.

Alternatively, you may send the URLs to your recommenders directly. Go to the application and click on the linked recommendations, then you will see the URL for both recommenders. You may copy these URLs and forward to the respective recommenders.

Finally, if the recommender has an alternate email address, you may want to try sending the request again to the alternate email.

If none of the steps above work, please send an email to scholarshipapplicants@worldbank.org explaining the issue. Be sure to include your full name and the name and email of your recommender.

One of my recommenders is getting the message: "You no longer need to upload the form for this applicant" and she/he cannot submit his/her recommendation for me. What can be done?

The reason this recommender cannot submit his/her recommendation is because the applicant deleted his/her contact from the Recommendation Request Form.