

Application instructions for NIG Global Scholar (NIG-GS) selection**Genetics Program, SOKENDAI****5-year PhD program in Life Sciences****Enrollment: October 2024 / Application Deadline: November 1, 2023****Eligibility:****【Important notice】**

- ◆ Please note that the NIG Global Scholar selection is different (in both process and timeline) from [the embassy recommendation process for the Japanese Government \(MEXT\) scholarship](#).
- ◆ The Genetics Program, SOKENDAI should be the applicant's first-choice for graduate studies. Applicants who passed the tertiary (final) screening must provide a decision on acceptance/decline by the designated date of February.
- ◆ The applicant must be able to travel to Japan from January 26 to February 3, 2024, to visit the National Institute of Genetics (NIG) and take an on-site entrance exam during the visit. The invitees to the on-site visit will need to submit a scanned copy of their passport and other required documents at the beginning of December, 2023.
* There is a possibility that the entrance exam would take place remotely (online) depending on the influence of COVID-19. In such a case, the invitation to travel to Japan would be canceled and the applicant would take the exam remotely at his/her place of residence on Jan 31 and Feb 1.

【Qualifications】**(1) Applicants:**

NIG-GS is designed for **international students** residing outside Japan at the time of application. The applicants should have earned a bachelor's degree or have academic ability equal or superior to that of a Japanese university graduate and achieved a minimum GPA of 2.3 on a 3.0 scale as calculated by the Japanese government official formula (see FAQ, Q7). The applicant is expected to maintain a GPA of 2.3 or higher for the entire duration of the 5-year PhD program.

In case the applicant's GPA cannot be calculated based on the Japanese government formula, it is necessary to submit a letter of recommendation from the Dean or higher of the attended school, which includes a statement that the applicant is ranked within the top 30% in the school, or university.

(2) Nationality:

The applicant must hold a nationality of a country that has diplomatic relations with the Japanese government (<http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/index.html>). Students who hold Japanese citizenship at the time of application are not eligible.

We encourage applications from the "priority nations/regions" (especially Southeast Asian countries). For the selection of the MEXT scholarship recipient, the slots for the students whose nationality is in countries not listed as the "priority nations/regions" are limited. Please see the document of "NIG Global Scholar (NIG-GS): Financial Support."

* See the attached list for "[Priority Nations/Regions](#)"

<Important exception> We accept applications from Taiwanese students even though they are not eligible for the MEXT scholarship. Because Taiwanese applicants cannot receive the MEXT scholarship after enrollment, they are

encouraged to apply for other scholarships such as Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association Scholarship (<https://www.koryu.or.jp/tw/business/scholarship/>), which is equivalent to the MEXT scholarship.

(3) Age:

According to the eligibility of the MEXT scholarship, the applicant must be under 35 years old as of April 1, 2024 (that is, born on or after April 2, 1989).

(4) Academic Background:

The applicant must have completed a total of 16 years of study at educational institutions or expect to have completed a total of 16 years by September 30, 2024.

* Please see FAQ, Q1 for more information. Those with questions or concerns regarding the qualifications are advised to contact the Genetics Program <info-soken@nig.ac.jp> well ahead of the application deadline.

(5) Study Area:

The study area must be in a related field that the applicant has already studied. The field of study must be one that is available at the Genetics Program.

(6) Language ability:

The applicant must have sufficient English ability to pursue his/her studies. Specifically, the applicant must fulfill either of the following requirements.

- a) Holds an English proficiency test score equivalent to B2 or above on the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages).
To see the CEFR Equivalency Chart, please confirm the following webpage.
[CEFR Equivalency Chart](#)
- b) Has completed an educational program whose primary language of instruction is English.

(7) Health:

The student must not have any physical or mental conditions that would prevent his/her graduate studies at the Genetics Program.

(8) Arrival in Japan:

The accepted applicant must be able to arrive in Japan in the period between the middle of September and the beginning of October, 2024. Those who arrive in Japan before the designated date for personal reasons will NOT be provided traveling expenses to Japan.

(9) Visa Requirement:

If selected, the applicant will be required to acquire a “Student” visa in the home country prior to coming to Japan and enter Japan with “Student” status upon arrival. Therefore, the successful applicant who is already in Japan under a different resident status must change his/her resident status to “Student” by the end of September, 2024 and re-enter Japan with “Student” status. (The applicant who comes to Japan with a visa or resident status other than “Student” will NOT qualify for the Japanese government scholarship. Also, please note that the applicant who changes his/her resident status to any status other than “Student” after entry into Japan will lose his/her status of a Japanese government scholarship student.) Please understand that there is no guarantee the original resident status such as Permanent or Long-term resident status will be restored even if you apply again after expiration of the “Student” visa.

(10) Others:

Students to whom any of the following restrictions apply will NOT be considered as candidates.

- [1] Military personnel or military civilian employees registered on the active list.
- [2] Applicants who are not able to arrive in Japan on the appointed dates.
- [3] Applicants who have received the MEXT scholarship within the past three years. (This restriction does not apply, however, to students who were enrolled as a scholarship student in a Japanese language and culture program or as a scholarship student in the Japan-Korea Joint Undergraduate Course for Science and Engineering.)
- [4] Applicants who have already won a scholarship from another institution (including scholarships from the government of their home country).
- [5] Applicants who have applied for the MEXT scholarship through another university or for the support system for foreign students by MEXT and JASSO simultaneously. (This restriction also applies to students who have been selected and are to be registered continuously through 2024 with the support system for foreign students conducted by MEXT and JASSO.)
- [6] Applicants who have enrolled in a Japanese university with “Student (ryugaku)” status at the time of the application and have enrolled/will be enrolled in a Japanese university as a privately-financed foreign student between the time of application and the beginning of the scholarship payment. If applicants who have enrolled/will be enrolled in a Japanese university as a privately-financed foreign student surely know at the time of the application that they will return to their home country before the scholarship period starts and will acquire a new “Student” visa and enter Japan with the visa, the preceding paragraph shall not apply to those applicants.

Timeline for the admissions process:

Before initial application:

Contact your [prospective mentor\(s\)](#) and discuss possible research projects.

* Faculty members who are scheduled to retire within the standard period of study (5 years from the time of admission for the 5-year PhD program) cannot be appointed as prospective mentors.

Primary screening

November 1, 2023: Deadline for submission of initial application documents

Please assemble all the required information in one file for each category (.doc or .pdf) and send it as an e-mail attachment to [<info-soken@nig.ac.jp>](mailto:info-soken@nig.ac.jp) by **noon on November 1, 2023 (Japan Standard Time)**

Required information

- Application form ([download the form from here](#))
- An essay describing why and what you want to study in the Genetics Program (no more than 1000 words). ([download the form from here](#))
- Books, papers, or lectures that were particularly interesting to you ([download the form from here](#))
- Latest academic transcripts (with GPA) issued by the college or university you attend/attended. If the explanation of grading scale/grading system is available, be sure to include that information.
- Examinee's Score Record for TOEFL-iBT or Test Report Form for IELTS (Academic Module)

The language test must be taken no longer than two years prior to the on-site exam day (January 31, 2024).

Please include a scanned copy of your score report form in your application document AND bring the original form if you are invited to NIG for the tertiary screening.

- Write "NIG-GS application" in the subject line of the e-mail
- Name the file as follows: Start with "FAMILY NAME (in capitals)", followed by underscore "_", and "given name". If your name is "Gregor Mendel", your filename should be "MENDEL _ Gregor".
- If a bachelor's degree course is/was offered in English, a proof that the language of instruction at attending/attended university is/was English can be substituted for a score report form of an English proficiency examination (TOEFL/IELTS).

Secondary screening

November 13, 2023: Deadline for submission of on-line exam

The applicants who passed the primary screening will be notified by November 7 and will be asked to take a written exam via e-mail (to be submitted by noon on November 13 (JST)). In this exam, the applicants will be asked to submit a mini report. The mini report is designed to test analytical ability rather than background and/or knowledge; no particular preparation is necessary.

Applicants are not allowed to contact any faculty of the Genetics Program from November 7 (distribution of the on-line written exam) until noon on November 24 (JST).

Submission of required documents for the tertiary screening

January 4, 2024: Deadline for submission of scanned copy

January 26, 2024: Deadline for submission of original documents

The candidates invited for the on-site visit and exam will be notified by November 28, 2023. Invitees must prepare and bring the original documents for application in hard copy when visiting NIG. A scanned copy of the candidate's passport will also need to be submitted at the beginning of December in order to arrange flights.

The documents listed below will need to be submitted **only** by those who are invited to visit NIG.

- Scanned copies of the documents for revision purposes should reach the Academic Services Division <info-soken@nig.ac.jp> as e-mail attachments no later than **January 4, 2024** before bringing the original documents.
- The original, printed documents should be submitted to the Academic Services Division before taking the on-site exam at NIG.

<NOTE> The submitted documents will NOT be returned under any circumstances. Please keep a copy of all the documents for personal reference. In the case that any of the documents is not re-issuable, please submit an attested (notarized) copy of it instead.

The main application documents are:

☐ **Application form**

The form is available in Excel and PDF (download the form from here: [Excel](#) / [PDF](#)). When you save the file, please do not forget to rename the file as "FAMILY NAME (in capitals)" _ "Given name" _ "1" (e.g. "MENDEL _ Gregor _ 1")

☐ **Field of study and study program**

☐ **Certificate of graduation or of current enrollment**

If you already have a bachelor's degree, please submit an original certificate of graduation (NOT the original diploma). If you are currently enrolled in a bachelor's program, please submit an original certificate of current enrollment that indicates the

expected date of graduation.

□ **Academic transcript**

Please submit an original certificate of your academic records. Final records will be required upon enrollment if you are currently enrolled in a university or graduate school. Please name the file as “FAMILY NAME (in capitals)”_”Given name”_”2” (e.g. “MENDEL_ Gregor _2”) when you send a scanned copy to the Genetics Program.

□ **Dean’s recommendation letter from the last university attended, addressed to the president of SOKENDAI (original)**

The documents above must be prepared in English or Japanese using word-processing software. Print all required documents on A4 size paper. For documents prepared in languages other than Japanese or English, attach a Japanese or English translation to each document.

Tertiary screening

January 26 ~ February 3, 2024: On-site visit and exam

The invited candidates will visit NIG in Mishima, Japan, and will be hosted by the lab of (one of) the prospective mentor(s). Invitees will take the written exam on January 31 and be interviewed on February 1.

* There is a possibility that the entrance exam would take place remotely (online) depending on the influence of COVID-19. In such a case, the invitation to travel to Japan would be canceled and the candidate would take the exam remotely at his/her place of residence on Jan 31 and Feb 1.

Decision for the enrollment

Late February, 2024

Candidates who passed the tertiary screening will be contacted by late February and financial offers will be provided at this time.

All the candidates who passed the tertiary screening must make an accept/decline decision and inform it by the designated date.

NIG-GS Selection Eligibility and Admissions FAQ

Q1: Is completion (or expected completion) of a bachelor's course in any country sufficient for eligibility for NIG-GS application?

A1: Bachelor's degrees from any country will be honored, as long as the applicant has completed (or is expected to complete) 16 years of formal education (from elementary school to undergraduate college). We will also consider applicants with 15 years of formal education if they have excellent school records. This includes applicants from countries whose period of formal education is less than 16 years and those who have advanced placement. Please inquire in advance if you have any questions on eligibility. Exceptional cases that may not qualify by the criteria above may also be considered. Details of the qualifications for application can be found at the following URL: https://www.soken.ac.jp/en/admission/general_admission/qualification/

Q2: If I already have a master's degree, can I still apply to NIG-GS?

A2: Yes, you can. Several of our current students indeed had master's degrees before entering. Please also note that having a master's degree on its own does not satisfy the eligibility for application; applicants must have had 16 years of formal education, as described in A1.

Q3: If I have a master's degree, can I graduate in less than 5 years?

A3: It is not automatically true. Like any graduate program, completion of coursework is not sufficient to obtain a PhD; one needs to conduct and report original research that contributes to the advancement of science and defend your thesis.

[https://www.soken.ac.jp/en/education/curriculum/requirement/
Degree Criteria / Diploma Policy](https://www.soken.ac.jp/en/education/curriculum/requirement/Degree%20Criteria%20Diploma%20Policy)

If it is recognized that a student has demonstrated "outstanding research performance", he/she may graduate before reaching the standard period of study.

Q4: When can I submit my NIG-GS application for next fiscal year?

A4: Please refer to the application guidelines which are revised every summer.

Q5: I am an international applicant currently residing in Japan. Can I apply to the NIG-GS?

A5: NIG-GS is open to applicants residing abroad (at the time of application). If you live in Japan at the time of application, please apply via General Admission.

[General Admission](#)

Q6: Are there any options other than NIG-GS selection for applying to get the MEXT scholarship?

A6: Yes, there is at least one option.

In some specific countries, the MEXT Scholarship is available through the embassy recommendation process.

https://www.soken.ac.jp/en/admission/mextscholarship/scholarship_jpn/index.html

Please check the Japanese embassy website in your own country for more information.

Q7: How can I estimate my GPA (grade point average)?

A7: Your official GPA score is calculated by the SOKENDAI administration office. The calculation method is described at: [Grade Point Average](#)
You may follow the link to learn how to estimate your GPA.

Q8: What is the minimum score of each English proficiency test required to apply to NIG-GS?

A8: Your TOEFL or IELTS score must be equivalent to CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) B2 level or above.

(There are minimum scores for the MEXT scholarship selection as follows:

TOEFL iBT: 72

<https://www.ets.org/toefl/institutions/scores/compare/>

IELTS: 5.5

<https://www.ielts.org/ielts-for-organisations/common-european-framework>

Q9: If I pass NIG-GS selection, will I receive financial support? Will my tuition be waived?

A9: Please see "[NIG-GS Financial Support](#)".