

Application instructions for NIG Global Scholar (NIG-GS) selection
Department of Genetics, SOKENDAI
5-year PhD program in Life Sciences
Enrollment: October 2020 / Application Deadline: November 5, 2019



Eligibility:

【Important notice】

- ◆ Please note that the NIG Global Scholar selection differs (in both process and timeline) from the embassy recommendation process for Japanese Government (MEXT) scholarships.
- ◆ The applicant's first-choice for graduate studies is the Department of Genetics, SOKENDAI.
- ◆ The applicant must be able to travel to Japan from January 24 to February 1, 2020, to visit the National Institute of Genetics (NIG) and take the 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.
- ◆ Applicants who passed the tertiary (final) screening must provide a decision on acceptance/decline by the designated date of February.

【Qualifications】

(1) Applicants:

NIG-GS is designed for **foreign students** residing outside Japan at the time of application who 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.

(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>). In particular, we welcome applications from Southeast Asian countries because of a strategy applied to the MEXT scholarship. Students who hold Japanese citizenship at the time of application are not eligible.

<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/>)

(3) Age:

The applicant must be under 35 years old as of April 1, 2020 (that is, born on or after April 2, 1985).

(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, 2020.

* Please see FAQ, Q1 for more information. Those with questions or concerns regarding the qualifications are advised to contact the Department of Genetics <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 Department of Genetics.

(6) Language ability:

The applicant must have sufficient English ability to pursue his/her studies.

(7) Health:

The applicant must be physically and mentally healthy enough to take graduate studies at the Department of Genetics.

(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, 2020. 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, 2020 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 2020 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.

Primary screening

November 5, 2019: Deadline for submission of initial application documents

Please assemble all the required information in one file for each category (.doc, .txt, or .pdf) and send it as an e-mail attachment to <info-soken@nig.ac.jp> by **noon on November 5, 2019 (Japan Standard Time)**

Required information

- CV (Curriculum Vitae) ([download the form from here](#))
- An essay describing why and what you want to study in the Department of Genetics (no more than 800 words). ([download the form from here](#))
- One or two name(s) of your prospective mentor(s). If you list two names, place them in order of preference. If you list any faculty member who will retire within a standard duration of the program (5 years), please list a substitute mentor as well.
- 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.

Please include a scanned copy of your Test Report Form in your application document AND bring the original report 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 the English proficiency examination report (TOEFL/IELTS).

Secondary screening

November 14, 2019: Deadline for submission of on-line exam

The applicants who passed the primary screening will be notified by November 8 and will be asked to take a written exam via email (to be submitted by noon on November 14 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 Department from November 8 (distribution of the on-line written exam) until 9:00 a.m. on November 26 (JST).

Submission of required documents for the tertiary screening

January 6, 2020: Deadline for submission of scanned copy

January 24, 2020: Deadline for submission of original documents

The candidates invited for the on-site visit and exam will be notified by November 29, 2019. 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 need to be submitted **only** by those who are invited to visit NIG

- Scanned copies of the documents for revision purposes should reach the Department of Genetics <info-soken@nig.ac.jp> as e-mail attachments by **January 6, 2020** before bringing the original documents.
- The original, printed documents should be submitted to the Education Team 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 Department of Genetics.
- **Recommendation 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 24 ~ February 1, 2020: 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 29 and be interviewed on January 30, 2020.

Decision for the enrollment

Late February, 2020

Candidates who passed the tertiary screening will be contacted on February 17 or earlier 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 the Education team by the designated date of February.

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 have a master's degree, can I apply to NIG-GS and graduate in less than 5 years?

A2: Several of our current students indeed had master's degrees before entering. 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/>

<https://www.nig.ac.jp/nig/phd-program/courses-top/degree-criteria>

Students may graduate before reaching the required period of attendance if the host department recognizes that a student has demonstrated "outstanding research performance".

Please 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: When can I send a NIG-GS application for next fiscal year?

A3: Please refer to the application guidelines which are revised every summer.

Q4: I am an international applicant currently residing in Japan. Can I apply to the NIG-GS?

A4: 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.

<https://www.nig.ac.jp/nig/phd-program/admissions-top/admissions/general-admissions>

Q5: Are there any options other than NIG-GS selection for applying to get the MEXT scholarship?

A5: Yes, there is at least one option.

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

<http://www.studyjapan.go.jp/en/toj/toj0302e-30.html>

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.

Q6: I have heard previously about "International Graduate Program (IGP)" or "Early Admission for MEXT scholarship (EA-MEXT)" of the Department of Genetics, SOKENDAI. Can I apply for IGP or EA-MEXT?

- A6:** We have combined IGP and EA-MEXT to create a unified system, NIG-GS, to support international students. Please apply to NIG-GS.
- 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:
http://www.nig.ac.jp/nig/pdf/phd_program/admissions/appendix_AboutMextGPA.pdf
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](#)".