

Step-By-Step Guide

TO MASTERS SCHOLARSHIPS IN JAPAN

GATEWAY TO FUNDED ENGLISH-TAUGHT MASTER'S IN JAPAN



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Welcome

If you're reading this, you've probably thought something like:

“

“I want to do my master's in Japan... but I can't afford it, and I don't know where to start.”

”

This guide is for international students and young professionals who want to study in Japan without going into massive debt, and who prefer programs that are taught in English

What you'll learn

Inside this guide, you'll find:

- Three real, fully-funded scholarship programs that can pay your tuition, flights, and living costs.
- The basic requirements for each scholarship, explained in simple language.
- A comparison table so you can quickly see which option fits you best.
- A step-by-step timeline and checklist, so you know what to do and when.
- Extra tips on documents, interviews, and life in Japan as a scholarship student.

All programs covered here are designed to be fully funded (tuition covered + strong financial support for living costs, flights, and insurance) and offer English-taught master's options in Japan.

How To Use this Guide

- 1 Start with the Overview to understand why Japan is such a strong choice for fully funded master's.
- 2 Read the Scholarship Comparison Table to see the three main scholarships side by side.
- 3 Deep-dive into each scholarship chapter and highlight the ones that match your passport, field, and experience.
- 4 Use the checklists and timeline near the end to plan your actual application year.
- 5 Save this PDF somewhere you'll come back to, it's your roadmap, not just a one-time read!



If you ever feel stuck or overwhelmed, you don't have to figure it all out alone.

At the end of the guide, we'll show you how to reach out to us at JoynTokyo for extra support



Quick note:

“All programs covered here are fully funded and available in English.”



Why Japan Is a Top Destination for Fully Funded Master's

Choosing where to do your master's is a big decision. Here's why Japan, especially with scholarships, is one of the strongest options in the world.

✓ HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION

Japan has some of the top universities in Asia and the world, especially in fields like engineering, science, policy, development, and sustainability. You'll be learning from researchers and practitioners who are active globally.

✓ SCHOLARSHIPS THAT REALLY PAY FOR THINGS

The scholarships in this guide don't just remove tuition. They also typically:

- **Pay for your flights**
- **Give you a monthly stipend to live on**
- **Often cover insurance and other fees**

That's why we say "study in Japan for free (or get paid to study)" - you're not just saving money, you're actually receiving support to focus on your degree

✓ ENGLISH-TAUGHT PROGRAMS

You don't need perfect Japanese to start. Many graduate programs in Japan- especially those linked to international scholarships - are taught fully in English. You can:

- **Study your master's in English**
- **Learn Japanese slowly for daily life and future work**
- **Build a network in an international environment**

✓ SAFETY, LIFESTYLE, AND EXPERIENCE

Japan is known for being safe, clean, and organized. Public transport is reliable, food is amazing, and you get to experience both traditional culture and modern city life in one place. As a scholarship student, you can enjoy this while focusing on your studies.

✓ FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

After graduation, many students:

- **Stay in Japan for jobs or research positions**
- **Work in international organizations, government, NGOs, consulting, or tech**
- **Use the "Japan + scholarship" story as a strong point on your CV**

Even if you don't stay forever, having a master's from Japan plus scholarship experience makes you stand out globally.



General Requirements



1 A bachelor's degree

With a solid academic record

2 Good English

Often proven with TOEFL/IELTS or similar

3 Clear reason

For your chosen field and how it connects to your home country or future career

4 Work experience

For some programs (like JJ/WBGSP and ADB-JSP), relevant work experience in development, policy, environment, or related areas

✗ You do not need to be rich. You do not need perfect Japanese.

○ You do need to be serious, motivated, and willing to put effort into your applications.

In the next sections, we'll walk you step by step through the three main scholarships that can make a master's in Japan completely possible - even if you thought it was out of reach.



Scholarship Comparison Table (Quick Glance)

A simple table comparing the **3 scholarships**, showing:

	TUITION	MONTHLY STIPEND	FLIGHT	INSURANCE	LANGUAGE	IDEAL FOR
JJ /WBGSP	Full	Yes	Yes +\$600 each way	Yes	English	Development Policy fields Economics
MEXT (Embassy)	Full	¥143,000~ 145,000	Yes	Yes	English and Japanese	Most fields, research track
ADB-Japan	Full	~ ¥147,000	Yes	Yes	English	Sustainability Environment Public policy



Scholarship #1:

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

1. What This Scholarship Covers

- Full tuition
- Monthly living stipend
(to cover housing, food, and daily expenses, and exact amount depends on the country where you study)
- Basic medical insurance obtained through the university
- Round-trip airfare between your home country and the host university
- Extra USD600 travel allowance each way

2. Who This Is For

Students from World Bank member developing countries
*no dual citizenship with a developed country

Interested in development, public policy, economics, sustainability

3. Entry Requirements

- Bachelor's degree (earned at least 3 years before you apply)
- To be already admitted to one of the JJ/WBGSP participating master's programs (outside your country of citizenship and residence)
- 3+ years of relevant work experience
- Good English (programs are taught in English)

4. Language

Japanese is not required to start the degree (though of course it helps for daily life in Japan).

5. Timeline

There are two separate JJ/WBGSP application windows, but you don't choose which one to use. Each master's program is already assigned to Window 1 or Window 2 depending on its own schedule. So once you're admitted and shortlisted, your program tells you:

01 Application Window #1

January 15 – February 27, 2026

02 Application Window #2

March 30 – May 29, 2026



Scholarship #2:

MEXT Embassy-Recommended Scholarship

1. Overview

- Japan's most famous scholarship
- Apply via your country's Japanese embassy or consulate under the "Research Student" category, then transition into a master's course at a Japanese university.

2. What You Get

- 1 Full tuition waiver**
- 2 Entrance fee waiver**
- 3 Round-trip airfare**
- 4 Monthly stipend (¥143,000–145,000 roughly)**
 - ¥143,000 for research students
 - ¥144,000 for master's students
 - ¥145,000 for doctoral students
- 5 University recommendation & support**

You'll usually enroll in Japan's National Health Insurance, paying a small monthly amount from your stipend, which makes hospital visits much cheaper.

3. Who This Is For

- Students in any major, including humanities, science, engineering
- Those willing to start as research students before entering master's
- People in a wide range of fields: engineering, science, agriculture, policy, humanities, social sciences, etc.

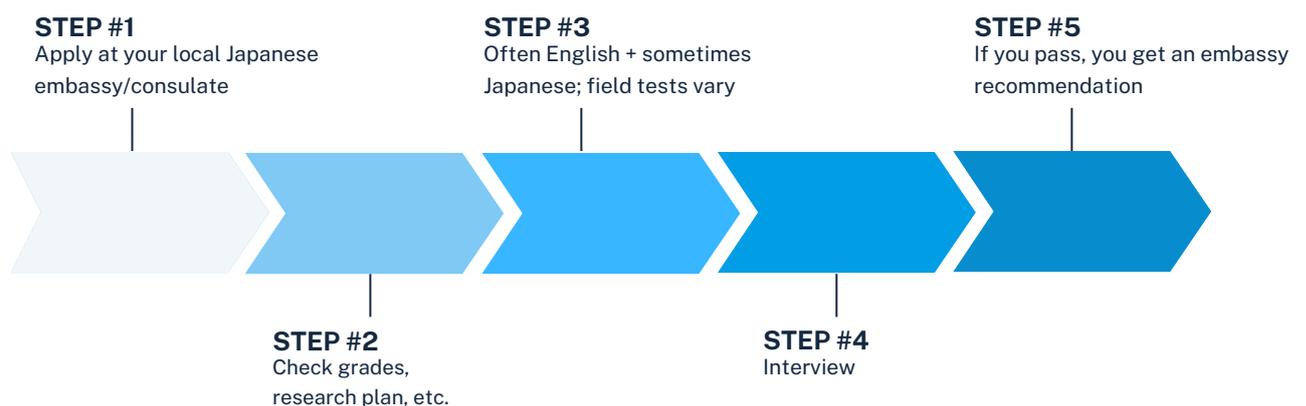
4. Entry Requirement

- Applicants who have the nationality of a country which has diplomatic relations with Japan.
- Applicants who will come to Japan in order to enroll as a student at NAIST.
- Applicants who were born after April 2, 1990.

5. Language

- English-taught programs available
- Japanese optional but helpful

6. Step-by-Step Embassy Application





Scholarship #3:

ADB–Japan Scholarship Program

1. What It Covers

- | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|---|--------------------------------|---|--------------------|
| 1 | Full tuition waiver | 2 | Monthly stipend
(~¥147,000) | 3 | Book allowance |
| 4 | Research
budget | 5 | Medical insurance | 6 | Round-trip flights |

2. Who Should Apply

- Students from ADB member countries
- People with a bachelor's degree and strong academic record
- Majors in science and technology, economics, business and management, development studies, law and public policy

3. Requirements

- Relevant work experience (have at least 2 years of full-time professional working experience [acquired after a university degree] at the time of application).
- Not hold dual citizenship of any developed country
- Have gained admission to an approved master's course at a Designated Institution
- Good English
- Bachelor's degree

4. Language

Programs conducted in English

STEP-BY-STEP CHECKLIST: HOW TO APPLY FOR ANY JAPANESE SCHOLARSHIP



Choose your scholarship	01
Research eligible universities	02
Contact professors (optional but helpful)	03
Prepare documents (CV, transcripts, SOP)	04
Prepare English test (TOEFL/IELTS if required)	05
Submit application before deadlines	06
Prepare for interview/written exams	07
Wait for results	08
Prepare for arrival in Japan	09

DOCUMENTS YOU WILL NEED

- 1 Statement of Purpose (SOP)
 - 2 Research plan (for MEXT)
 - 3 Academic CV / Resume
 - 4 Transcripts and certificates
 - 5 Passport copy
 - 6 Work experience letters (JJ/WBGSP & ADB)
 - 6 Recommendation letters
-
-
-
-



PUBLIC POLICY

- **The University of Tokyo – GraSPP (Graduate School of Public Policy)**
Offers an English-taught Master of Public Policy (International Program).
- **Waseda University**
Multiple English-based graduate programs, including public management / policy-related fields.
- **GRIPS (National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies)**
A graduate school in Tokyo focused on public policy, development, economics, etc., with MA/PhD programs taught in English.



DEVELOPMENT / SUSTAINABILITY



- **Kyoto University**
Has English-taught degree programs and a Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies for environment/sustainability topics.
- **Nagoya University**
Its Global 30 (G30) graduate programs include English-taught options such as Civil & Environmental Engineering and International Development-related fields.
- **UNU (United Nations University, Tokyo)**
Offers an English-taught MSc in Sustainability through UNU-IAS.

ENGINEERING / SCIENCE

- **Tokyo Institute of Technology (Tokyo Tech)**
International Graduate Program (IGP) with master's and doctoral programs conducted entirely in English.
- **Osaka University**
Graduate School of Engineering / Engineering Science has programs that accept international students and offers English-taught options.
- **Tohoku University**
Provides multiple graduate courses in English, including engineering-focused programs like International Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering and International Civil & Environmental Engineering.





MEXT EMBASSY DEADLINES



Around April–May

For MEXT Embassy, expect to apply around April–May a year before you want to arrive, do exams and interviews in early summer, and get final results by the end of the year for an April (or sometimes October) start in Japan

JJ/WBGSP DEADLINES



First Window

January 15 – February 27, 2026

Second Window

March 30 – May 29, 2026

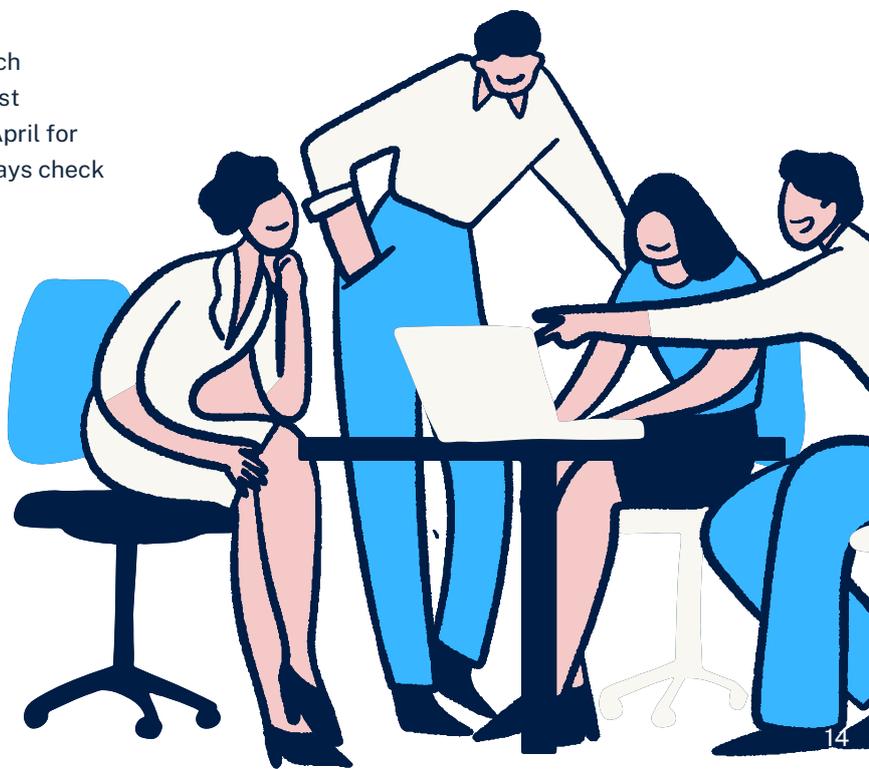
JJ/WBGSP doesn't have one universal 'deadline day'. Instead, it has two scholarship windows. The first application window is January 15 – February 27, 2026, and the second application window is March 30 – May 29, 2026. Your window is decided by which participating master's program you choose, so always check the latest window list on the World Bank site!

ADB–JAPAN DEADLINES



between
December and April

For ADB–JSP, there is no single global deadline. Each partner university sets its own closing date, but most Japanese programs close between December and April for students arriving the following academic year. Always check the exact ADB–JSP page of your target university



Common Mistakes That Make Applicants Fail



1 Writing a general SOP

2 Not linking career goals to home country development

3 Lack of research experience for MEXT

4 Missing deadlines

5 Low-quality recommendation letters



Start with student options first

University dorms and university-recommended apartments are usually cheaper and easier to set up (no key money, lower deposits, furniture included, shorter contracts). Always check:

- University dorms / international dorms
 - “Recommended” apartments near campus
 - Whether your scholarship or university has special housing support for international students
-



Consider share houses if dorms are full

Share houses (especially those aimed at foreigners) often include:

- Furniture, Wi-Fi, basic appliances
- No key money, and lower upfront costs than regular apartments
- A built-in social circle (good for people new to Japan)

They can be slightly more expensive per month than the absolute cheapest apartments, but cheaper upfront and way easier to move into.



Save money by choosing location smartly

Being right next to a big station in Tokyo is pricey. Often:

- 1–2 stops away, or
- 10–15 minutes by bicycle from campus

...can cut your rent a lot, while still being very convenient.

Saving money on health, food, transport

- In Japan, many supermarkets start putting discount stickers on bentos and ready-made food in the evening. If you go after around 7–8pm, you can often get dinner for 30–50% off. Japan’s trains are amazing... and the cost adds up fast if you pay per ride.
- Get a student commuter pass (teikiken) for the route between your home and university. It gives you unlimited rides on that route for 1, 3, or 6 months and can save a lot compared to single tickets.

HOW TO LIVE CHEAP IN JAPAN ON A SCHOLARSHIP PART-TIME WORK: WHAT'S ACTUALLY ALLOWED?



Your main job is studying. But if your scholarship and visa allow, a small part-time job can give you extra money and language practice.

Important basics for student visas in Japan:

- You must get a special permission called
 - “Permission to Engage in Activity Other Than That Permitted by the Status of Residence”
 - (資格外活動許可 / shikakugai katsudō kyoka).
 - With that permission, international students can work up to 28 hours per week during the semester, and up to 8 hours per day during long vacations.
 - You are not allowed to work in adult entertainment / nightlife jobs (by law).
-

Scholarship-specific rules:

- Some scholarships (especially MEXT, and sometimes ADB/JJ via the university) allow part-time work only if it doesn't interfere with your studies, and may require extra approval from your university.
- Other schools strongly discourage or limit part-time jobs for scholarship students.
- Always check:
 - Immigration rules
 - Your scholarship regulations
 - Your university's own policy



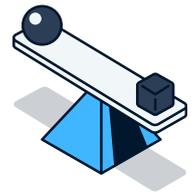
What to Do After Submitting



HOW TO PREPARE FOR INTERVIEWS

What they usually want to see:

- Do you have a clear reason for studying this field in Japan?
- Do you understand how this scholarship fits your future goals?
- Can you talk about your past experience, projects, or research in a simple, confident way?



How to prepare:

- Re-read your Statement of Purpose / research plan and be ready to explain it in normal, simple language.
- Practice answering questions like:
 - “Why Japan and not another country?”
 - “How will you use this degree to help your home country?”
 - “Tell me about a project or challenge you’re proud of.”
- Do a **few mock interviews** with a friend, teacher, or online mentor – even recording yourself helps.



Remind readers: Interviewers are not trying to trap you; they just want to see if you’re serious, realistic, and a good fit.



What to Do After Submitting

HOW TO CONTACT PROFESSORS POLITELY

For some scholarships (especially MEXT) and many master's programs, contacting potential supervisors can boost your chances if done well.

Basic email structure:

1. Short subject line:
2. "Prospective MEXT applicant interested in your research on [topic]"
3. Brief self-intro: name, country, current degree/field
4. One sentence on why you're emailing this professor (connect to their research)
5. 2-3 sentences on your background and what you want to research
6. A polite question, e.g.:
 - "Would you be open to supervising a master's student on [topic] starting in [year]?"
 - "Would it be possible to have a short online meeting to ask a few questions about your lab?"
7. Thank them for their time.

Golden rules:

- Keep it short and respectful.
- Do not ask "Can you guarantee I'll be accepted?"
- Always proofread for basic English mistakes.

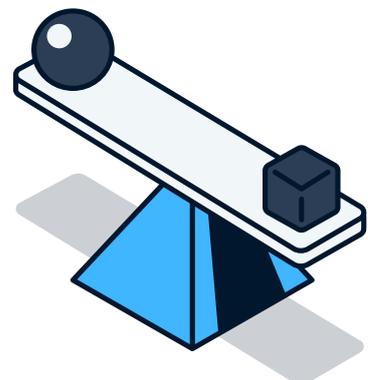


What to Do After Submitting



WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET REJECTED (NEXT-CYCLE STRATEGY)

- **Figure out what went wrong (or might have).** Were your grades or test scores weak?
 - Was your research plan too vague?
 - Did you apply very last-minute?
- **Strengthen your profile over the next 6–12 months.** Get more relevant work or research experience.
 - Improve your English score (TOEFL/IELTS).
 - Rewrite your SOP/research plan with a clearer story and better connection to your home country's needs.
- **Apply again – smarter.** Maybe switch to a program that's a better fit.
 - Consider applying to more than one scholarship or university, as long as the rules allow





JoynTokyo

JoynTokyo is a project by JIMA Inc., a Japan-based company that helps people from around the world study, work, and build a new life in Japan. While JIMA works on different projects around global talent and Japan, JoynTokyo is the part that focuses specifically on guiding foreigners who want to come to Japan for study and career.

Why you made this guide

We kept meeting smart, motivated people who wanted to do a master's in Japan, but the information was scattered, confusing, or only in Japanese. Many didn't know which scholarships were real, which websites to trust, or how the timelines actually work. We created this guide so you have one simple, honest roadmap that shows you real fully funded options, in English, without the fluff or fake promises.

How you help international students navigate Japan

Through JoynTokyo, we break down the whole “study in Japan” journey into clear, practical steps: from understanding scholarships, to choosing programs, to planning what happens after you land in Japan.

We share guides, videos, and resources based on real programs and real experiences, so you can make confident decisions about your future here.

Disclaimer

JoynTokyo is a lifestyle and culture publication, not a legal or immigration service. Nothing we share is legal advice - for personal visa or immigration questions, please speak with a licensed professional. All content is for general informational purposes only.



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