

Application Guidelines

2026 Support Project for Pioneering Research Initiated
by the Next Generation in Doshisha University Doctoral Course

September 8, 2025

~Message from the Project Supervisor~

This project supports doctoral students who will play a key role in the future of science, technology, and innovation. The challenges facing modern society are all complex and cannot be solved within the confines of a single field of expertise. There is a need for individuals who not only possess specialized knowledge but also have the ability to take a broad perspective on societal issues. Through this project, you will develop the necessary skills to tackle such challenges. The founder of Doshisha, Joseph Hardy Neesima, wrote the following Chinese poem:

真理似寒梅敢侵風雪開

(Truth is like a plum in the cold, it dares to bloom, braving storms and snows.)

Neesima speaks of truth as a force to challenge the trends of society and the times. At the age of 21, he crossed the seas and challenged the world. Doshisha continues to inherit this spirit of challenge. I hope that you will become seekers of truth who take on the challenges of the next generation.

Doshisha 150th Anniversary
The future ahead rests on your shoulders.
Open the door to truth and pave a new path!



KOHARA Katsuhiro
Project Supervisor
Support Project for Pioneering
Research Initiated by the Next
Generation in Doshisha University
Doctoral Course

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I. Purpose of the Project

Doshisha University implements “The Support Project for Pioneering Research Initiated by the Next Generation in Doshisha University Doctoral Course” (hereinafter referred to as “the Project”) with the support of the “Next-Generation Researchers Challenging Research (SPRING)” program by the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST).

The Project aims to develop students who are equipped with the ability to create cutting-edge scientific technologies for future innovation while upholding ethical

standards and human dignity through a strong sense of conscience.

As a principle of Doshisha University, the Project aims to develop highly specialized professionals who can create a new era through profound learning and outstanding practical abilities, and who can understand and collaborate with people of different values, views and cultures. Moreover, the Project aims to promote mutual understanding among the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences in order to develop outstanding researchers who can foresee future problems and find solutions from a global perspective.

2. Project Details

For doctoral students selected into the Project with a proactive attitude toward unconstrained, challenging, and interdisciplinary research (hereinafter referred to as “SPRING Students”), the Project will provide an environment (including research allowance) that enables you to concentrate on your research activities and enhance your research capabilities. In addition, the Project will offer various career development programs to secure your career paths.

★ Following the government's revision of the SPRING program (<https://www.jst.go.jp/report/2025/250709.html>), the support content for international students selected in this call will be changed.

The Research Allowance (equivalent to living expenses) support will be as outlined below.

①AY2026 will provide Research Allowance (equivalent to living expenses) support (current policy)

②AY2027 and beyond will NOT provide Research Allowance (equivalent to living expenses) support (new policy)

※We will announce the specific details of the new support policy once they are finalized. These updates will be shared through the university’ s official website and the Q&A documents. International students who are considering applying are advised to pay close attention to these announcements.

(1) Research Allowance and Research Expenses.

The following amount will be provided during the supported period:

-Research allowance: ¥1,800,000 per year

-Research expenses: ¥400,000 per year

※Research allowance is taxable as a miscellaneous income, so you will need to file your own tax return.

※Research allowance will be paid monthly (evenly divided amount of the above yearly amount) until the final month of the support period.

※Research expenses will be managed by Doshisha University.

※Research expenses may be increased for competitive research funds or overseas activities.

(2) Main Programs

- Developing transferable skills
- Cultivating global perspective
- Fostering an attitude toward pursuit of challenging and interdisciplinary research
- Enhancing research capabilities

※For details about the programs, please refer to the SPRING “Guide for the Candidates.”

3. The Number of SPRING Students to be Selected

D1 (AY2026 First-Year Student or

Third-year student in the integrated doctoral program) : 19 students

D2 (AY2026 Second-Year Student or

Fourth-year student in the integrated doctoral program) : A few students

D3 (AY2026 Third-Year Student or

Fifth-year student in the integrated doctoral program) : A few students

*The number of students to be selected may change depending on the progress of this project.

*For D2 and D3 positions, acceptance will occur only when vacancies arise (e.g., if a current SPRING student is adopted for JSPS Doctoral Course (DC) Research Fellowships (DC2), etc.). We plan to announce the number of students to be selected on our university website around mid-October 2025. Furthermore, depending on the review of the JST/SPRING program framework which is the basis of this project, we may not accept D2 and D3 positions.

4. Support Period

D1 :Standard period of study* and April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2029 (3 years)

D2:Standard period of study* and April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2028 (2 years)

D2:Standard period of study* and April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2027 (1 year)

* This refers to the three-year period from the first to third year of the doctoral program or the third to fifth year of the integrated doctoral program.

※Support through this application lasts for the remainder of the standard period minus the period for which the student is already enrolled. For students using the long-term course system, the support period cannot exceed the standard period.

5. Eligibility

Applicants need to meet the following requirements.

(1) As of April 1, 2026, applicants must meet one or more of the following requirements (regardless of your graduate school affiliation or research field).

【D1】

- Students planning to enroll in the first year of a doctoral program
- Students planning to transfer into the third year of an integrated doctoral program
- Students enrolled in the equivalent of the first year of a doctoral program (Less than 12 months of enrollment)
- Students enrolled in the equivalent of the third year of an integrated doctoral program (Enrollment period: 24 months or more but less than 36 months)

【D2】

- Students enrolled in the equivalent of the second year of a doctoral program (Enrollment period: 12 months or more but less than 24 months)
- Students enrolled in the equivalent of the fourth year of an integrated doctoral program (Enrollment period: 36 months or more but less than 48 months)

【D3】

- Students enrolled in the equivalent of the third year of a doctoral program (24 months of enrollment)
- Students enrolled in the equivalent of the fifth year of an integrated doctoral program (48 months of enrollment)

※You are not eligible to apply if your support period is less than 12 months.

(2) However, applicants who are in any of the following cases as of April 1, 2026 (at the start of SPRING support period) are NOT eligible.

- ① Recipients of JSPS Doctoral Course (DC) Research Fellowships
- ② International students receiving support through the government-financed scholarships (MEXT), etc.
- ③ International students receiving scholarships or other financial support from their home countries
- ④ Recipients of other scholarships or grants that impose an obligation to dedicate themselves to research
- ⑤ Those who receive more than ¥2,400,000 as salary, executive compensation, or other stable income from their affiliated organizations
- ⑥ Those who are not eligible for support under this project

※To confirm the eligibility, we may ask for some income certificates.

※Please note that if you come to fall under any of these conditions after being selected, you will lose your eligibility as a SPRING student. In such cases, please promptly submit a “Withdrawal Form.”

【Scholarships that can be received concurrently】

You may receive the following grant-based scholarships concurrently.

- ① Doshisha University Graduate School Scholarships for Young Doctoral

Students/Researchers

- ② Doshisha University Graduate School Scholarships
- ③ Doshisha University Scholarships by Endowments
- ④ Doshisha University Graduate School of Brain Science Special Scholarship
- ⑤ Doshisha University Graduate School Reduced Tuition Special Scholarships for Self-Funded International Students
- ⑥ Doshisha University Reduced Tuition Scholarships for Self-Funded international Students
- ⑦ Doshisha University Merit Scholarships for Self-Funded International Students
- ⑧ Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO) Scholarships
- ⑨ Other scholarships issued to pay for tuition

5a. Loss of Eligibility

In addition to cases where the applicant no longer meets the requirements listed under “5. Eligibility,” students will also lose their qualification for support under the following circumstances.

- (1) If the student takes a leave of absence during the support period
- (2) If the student withdraws or otherwise loses their enrollment status at Doshisha University
- (3) If the student is subject to disciplinary action under the university’ s regulations on student conduct
- (4) If the student is found to have committed research misconduct, as determined under Doshisha University’ s regulations on handling such cases
- (5) If the SPRING committee determines, based on the student’ s fulfillment of project obligations, that the student is no longer suitable to receive support

6. Obligations

The SPRING students must fulfill all of the following requirements:

- (1) Observe Doshisha University Code of Research Ethics.
- (2) Comply with the responsibilities stated in the “Regulations on Handling Research Misconduct” at Doshisha University.
- (3) Properly execute research allowance, etc. in accordance with “Regulations on the Operation and Management of Public Research Funds” of Doshisha University.
- (4) Take Research Ethics Education Programs assigned by Doshisha University and JST.
- (5) Participate in career development programs, such as career development guidance, networking events with companies, etc. assigned by the Project Supervisor.
- (6) Take courses assigned by the Project Supervisor from career creating systems of Advanced Liberal Arts (ALA) offered by the Institute for Advanced Research and Education.
- (7) Submit an Overseas Activity Plan that will advance your research and lead you to

- develop as a researcher with the approval of your academic advisor.
- (8) Participate in events such as student networking events by JST.
 - (9) Respond to surveys conducted by JST and Doshisha University.
 - (10) Actively participate in academic conference, submit papers for publication, give oral presentations, and archive research papers submitted to journals.
 - (11) Submit the Research Activity Report to the Project Supervisor every academic year.
 - (12) Register for the Japan Graduates Database (JGRAD) of the National Institute of Science and Technology Policy (NISTEP), MEXT.
 - (13) Apply for JSPS Doctoral Course (DC) Research Fellowships.

Regarding (3): to properly execute the Research Allowance, etc., you need to submit a research expenses plan at the beginning of each academic year. You should describe how you will develop your research and how you will use the research funds effectively.

Regarding (5) and (6): for the programs assigned by the Project Supervisor, please refer to the separate material (*Guide for the Candidates*) provided.

SPRING students must continue to do the following after the support period ends.

- (1) Cooperate with follow-up surveys conducted by JST and Doshisha University after completing your doctoral program.
- (2) Update the information of JGRAD as necessary.

7. Application Procedures

(1) Application Documents

Please submit the following application documents. Applications without documents ①, ②, and ③ will not be accepted (i.e. you will not be reviewed). While the application will be accepted without ④, the absence of this document will result in no additional points being awarded in the screening process.

- ① Statement of Purpose and Research Proposal (prescribed form)
- ② Recommendation Letter from Academic Advisor (prescribed form)
- ③ Copy of Official Scores of English Proficiency (exams taken after August 2024) or “Notification of Exemption from Submission of Certificate of English Proficiency” (prescribed form).
- ④ The Result of the 2026 JSPS Doctoral Course (DC) Research Fellowships (Copy of the result)

※Please download the prescribed application forms from the following URL.
https://rd.doshisha.ac.jp/rd/inside/wakate/spring/additional_recruitment.html

(2) Guidelines for Preparing Application Documents

① Statement of Purpose and Research Proposal

• The body of the text should be written in the font size of 10.5 or larger.

• **【Statement of Purpose】**

This project aims to support unconstrained, challenging and interdisciplinary research which transcends traditional frameworks. Please concisely describe your reasons for applying, addressing the type of researcher you aspire to become, how you intend to make use of this project, and how you plan to engage with it.

• **【Overseas Activity Plan】**

This project aims to cultivate a spirit of challenge and independence as a researcher. Applicants are expected to propose an overseas activity plan that outlines how you intend to develop your own research themes in an international setting. Please describe, in concrete terms, how your research is positioned within global research trends, and what kinds of international activities you plan to undertake in order to further advance your work.

• **【Research Plan】**

① Describe the research background to date, the positioning of your own research, and the background of the current state and challenges in the relevant field.

② Describe the research purposes, research methods, and research content in your research plan, including what ways you will make use of the provided research expenses to further develop your research.

③ Also describe characteristics and originality of your research (comparisons with existing research, the anticipated impact upon completion of this research, and future prospects, etc.).

④ Concept for Approaches to Solving Social Issues: describe how your research can be applied to solving social issues.

② Recommendation Letter from Academic Advisor

If selected for this project, you will be expected to engage in both your own research and career development as a researcher. To ensure a balance between research and career development after selection, please obtain and submit a letter of recommendation from your academic advisor, including their handwritten signature.

③ “Copy of Official Scores of English Proficiency” or “Notification of Exemption from Submission of Certificate of English Proficiency”

• To confirm your sufficient English proficiency to participate in the various programs offered by this project, you are required to submit official score reports (copies) of your English proficiency exams, such as Eiken, TOEFL, IELTS, TOEIC, etc. The results must be from exams taken after August 2024.

• The following students are exempted from submitting the official scores of English proficiency. If you are eligible, submit the “Notification of Exemption from Submission of Certificate of English Proficiency” (prescribed form).

– International students from countries where English is the native language

– Students who have graduated or completed higher education such as universities or graduate schools in English-speaking countries

(If you are unsure about your eligibility, you may inquire in advance using “10. Inquiries regarding the Call for Applications.”)

④ The Result of the 2026 JSPS Doctoral Course (DC) Research Fellowships Application (Copy of the result)

- As this project strongly encourages applicants to apply for the JSPS DC Research Fellowships (see “6. Obligations”), the selection process will award additional points based on the screening result of the JSPS DC Research Fellowships for the same academic year as the application. If you wish to receive these additional points, please submit a copy of the review result for the JSPS DC Research Fellowships for AY2026.
- Please submit either a PDF file of the review result or a JPEG file captured from the screen.
- After creating the file, be sure to check that the T-score is visible. If the T-score on the submitted file cannot be read, the submission will be considered invalid (no points will be added).

(3) How to Apply

Please submit your application online using the prescribed form (Microsoft Forms). Applications submitted through other means (e.g., postal mail, in-person delivery, email, etc.) will not be accepted under any circumstances.

After filling out the prescribed form, upload your PDF files of “Statement of Purpose and Research Proposal,” “Recommendation Letter from Academic Advisor,” “Copy of Official Scores of English Proficiency” or “Notification of Exemption from Submission of Certificate of English Proficiency.”

*Each uploaded file must be no larger than 10MB.

*Name the files as follows:

[Name of the graduate school applicant’ s name.pdf]

[Name of the graduate school_applicant’ s name_Letter.pdf]

[Name of the graduate school_applicant’ s name_EnTest.pdf]

e.g., Theology_John Smith.pdf

Theology_John Smith_Letter.pdf

«Submission Forms for Application»

<https://forms.office.com/r/k2MVPXfWkb>

*You must log in with your university-issued email address when accessing the forms. If you do not have the user ID of Doshisha University, contact the SPRING Management Office (refer to I I. Contact) and the Office will guide you through the application process. Please contact us as early as possible to have enough time before the deadline.

(4) Application Period

Monday, December 8, 2025 ~ Tuesday, January 6, 2026, 12:00 PM

(Japan Standard Time: Noon) [Strict Deadline]

※Applications submitted outside the designated application period will not be accepted under any circumstances. Please make sure to complete the application process well in advance.

8. Selection Method

The selection will be conducted through a comprehensive evaluation based on the following three scoring criteria: “Review Result of JSPS Doctoral Course (DC) Research Fellowships” (hereinafter referred to as “JSPS T-Score”), “Document Screening” and “Interview Screening.”

(1) Document Screening

The selection criteria for Document Screening are as follows.

【Selection Criteria】

- (1) Shows promise as a researcher and has a clear sense of direction in their academic goals.
- (2) The proposed research is clearly articulated, methodologically sound, and possesses strong potential for further advancement.
- (3) Demonstrates a clear career vision as a researcher (including overseas activities).

(2) Interview Screening

Candidates for the Interview Screening are selected based on their scores from the “JSPS T-Score” and the “Document Screening.” Details regarding the Interview Screening will be announced via email to eligible candidates approximately two weeks before the interview date.

【Interview Schedule】

Interviews will be scheduled as follows. Please arrange your schedule in advance. Regardless of the reason, failure to attend the interview will result in no points being awarded for the interview evaluation.

Place: Imadegawa Campus (in-person)

Date: Mid to late February 2026 (scheduled)

※Exact dates will be announced at a later date on the website of university's Organization for Research Initiatives and Development.

Interview Duration: 10 minutes/person 【Presentation: 3 minutes (strictly timed) + Q&A: 7 minutes】

【Criteria for Interview Screening】

Applicants will be evaluated based on their self-assessment as researchers and their plans for future growth and development, focusing on the three key perspectives emphasized by this project: research capability, cultivation of global

perspective, and development of transferable skills.

Based on the submitted “Official Scores of English Proficiency,” applicants with insufficient English proficiency will also be assessed their motivation and the specificity of their plans for improvement. This includes how they intend to enhance their English skills and how they plan to engage with the various programs offered by this project that require English proficiency.

In consideration of the purpose of this project, international students will be evaluated not based on contributions to their home countries, but from the perspective of how they can contribute to innovation in Japan.

【Interview Screening Method】

You will give a 3-minute presentation (strictly timed) using the presentation materials you submitted in advance (see [Presentation Materials] below for details). Please note that the presentation will be strictly limited to 3 minutes and will be stopped at the 3-minute mark, even if it is still in progress. Following the presentation, there will be a Q&A session with the selection committee.

Since the selection committee members are not necessarily experts in your specific research field, please ensure that your presentation is clear and understandable to researchers from other disciplines.

【Presentation Materials】

There are no restrictions on the format of the presentation materials, but as a general rule, please use PowerPoint for your presentation. Be sure to include content that addresses the three core elements emphasized by this project: (1) the research capabilities, (2) the cultivation of global perspective, and (3) the development of transferable skills.

(Example):

(research capabilities) The type of researcher you aspire to become and the positioning of your research in relation to that goal

(global perspective) Vision for International Research Engagement and Overseas Activity Plan

(transferable skills) Skills considered necessary beyond research ability and a plan to develop them

The presentation file must not exceed 10MB and you need to submit it in advance. (The Project will inform interview-eligible candidates of the submission methods and deadlines in the notification email.) Editing your presentation file will not be allowed once submitted regardless of the reason. Please make sure to check carefully before submitting.

Due to the short timeframe between interview notification and the deadline for submitting presentation materials, we advise that you prepare your presentation well in advance. Please note that late submissions will not be considered for interview evaluation.

9. Notification of selection

Applicants will be notified of the selection results via email by early March 2026. For those not selected, we will provide your relative ranking among the unsuccessful applicants. If you do not receive any notification, please contact the SPRING Management Office (refer to “I I. Contact”).

I 0. Inquiries regarding the Call for Applications

Eligible Applicants may ask questions only through the following inquiry form. We will not respond to inquiries that are unrelated to this call for applications. The SPRING Management Office will not respond to inquiries made by phone or email.

Question Form: <https://forms.office.com/r/AzRAVR4QEs>

Inquiry period: Until Monday, December 22, 2025 12:00pm (Japan Standard Time)

We will answer the questions through the university's Webdisk (shared disk) by Friday, December 26. We will not answer individually, so please check the latest files stored on Webdisk (shared disk) as needed.

※URL of Webdisk (shared disk) ::

https://webdisk.doshisha.ac.jp/public/YK5igNsN_RAlzBpDy8-oeX_8xBCrUiM5aKxmUmPd_ci3

To ensure fairness and transparency, we kindly ask for your understanding that all questions and corresponding answers submitted through inquiries will, in principle, be disclosed publicly.

I I. Contact

Support Project for Pioneering Research Initiated by the Next Generation
in Doshisha University Doctoral Course (SPRING) Management Office
(Department of Research Planning, Organization for Research Initiatives and Development)
E-Mail: dfs-spring@mail.doshisha.ac.jp

I 2. Others

If selected as a SPRING Student, your name, research field, research theme, and other details will be publicly announced. You are also expected to cooperate in publicizing your research results and activity.