

**Supporting
Aspirational
Career development and
Research
Activities for PhD Students in Tokai
University
(Tokai-SPRING SACRA)**

**Guidelines for Application to the SACRA
Program**

- i) Autumn Semester 2025 Intake**
- ii) Spring Semester 2026 Intake**

1 Purpose of the SACRA Program

Doctoral students are expected to play a vital role in advancing Japan's science, technology, and innovation. At Tokai University (hereinafter "the University"), we are committed to fostering doctoral talent in accordance with our founding philosophy, "to nurture individuals who will shape the history of tomorrow, contributing to the happiness and peace of humankind." This commitment includes strengthening collaboration between secondary and higher education, as well as actively supporting the development and advancement of doctoral students.

The "Tokai-SPRING SACRA (Supporting Aspirational Career development and Research Activities)" program is implemented with institutional support from the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST). This educational initiative is intended for highly skilled and motivated doctoral students who will lead the future of science, technology, and innovation in Japan. The program provides comprehensive financial support—covering both living expenses and research funding—for a period of up to three years (or up to four years for students in the Course of Advanced Medical Science (doctoral program), Graduate School of Medicine). Through this support, the program fosters the development of doctoral researchers with deep expertise and broad perspectives. Through this program, we aim to cultivate individuals with the ambition and ability to identify and address complex challenges embedded in nature, society, local communities, and industry. The program offers various forms of support—such as career development content and skill-building opportunities—designed to equip doctoral students with the competencies needed to thrive in diverse sectors, including industry.

2 Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must satisfy all of the conditions 2.1 through 2.4, and meet either condition 2.5 or 2.6.

2.1 Applicants must understand the objectives and educational philosophy of the SACRA program, aspire to contribute to society through careers in academia or industry, and be willing to actively participate in the career development and training components required by the program.

2.2 (i) For those applying for the Autumn 2025 intake: applicants must be enrolled in a doctoral or late-stage doctoral program as of October 1, 2025.

(ii) For those applying for the Spring 2026 intake: applicants must be enrolled (or expected to be enrolled) in a doctoral or late-stage doctoral program as of April 1, 2026.

Applicants enrolled (or expected to be enrolled) in the four-year Course of Advanced Medical Science (doctoral program), Graduate School of Medicine, are

eligible to apply under either (i) or (ii) in this round.

- 2.3 Applicants must have obtained consent from their (prospective) academic advisor to participate in the SACRA program.
- 2.4 Applicants must commit to attending training in research ethics, such as the APRIN e-learning program (eAPRIN) “Responsible Conduct of Research.”
* Details regarding how to complete this training will be provided after selection
- 2.5 Applicants must be either Japanese nationals, special permanent residents, or possess a residency status listed in Appendix II of [the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act](#) (such as Permanent Resident, Long-Term Resident, or Spouse/Child of a Japanese national or Permanent Resident).
- 2.6 Alternatively, applicants may be privately funded international students with “Student” residency status, enrolled in a regular academic program.

Ineligibility Conditions

Applicants who fall under any of the following categories at the time the support begins are **not eligible** for the SACRA program:

- a Those who are recipients of the JSPS Research Fellowship for Young Scientists (DC).
- b Those appointed as 特定助手 (Designated research staff under Tokai University’s internal system).
- c Those who are deemed to be receiving a sufficient and stable income equivalent to living expenses (2.4 million JPY/year, tax inclusive) through salary, executive compensation, or other regular payments from their university, company, or affiliated institution.

* “Stable income” refers to fixed earnings such as a full-time salary, executive compensation from a startup, or payment as a part-time lecturer. Income from paid internships, TA/RA positions, or part-time jobs, as well as research funding, is not considered stable income.

- d International students receiving financial support through the Japanese Government (MEXT) Scholarship, scholarships from their home governments or equivalent foreign support schemes.

* Students who are currently receiving or are scheduled to receive such scholarships may still apply for the SACRA program; however, they must acknowledge that acceptance into SACRA may result in the cancellation of the other scholarship or a request for repayment, depending on the rules of the funding organization.

Conditions for Termination of Support

Support under the SACRA program will be terminated even during the funding period if any of the following applies:

- The recipient is selected as a **JSPS Research Fellow** (e.g., DC fellowship) during

the support period.

- The recipient is appointed to a **faculty position**, including assistant professor or equivalent, at Tokai University or another institution during the support period.
- The recipient begins receiving a **stable income equivalent to living expenses** (2.4 million JPY/year, tax inclusive), such as salary or executive compensation.
- The recipient is determined to have shown **insufficient engagement or poor performance** in required program activities as a SACRA fellow.

Important Notes on Future Funding

Please note that the scope of support after fiscal year 2027 is subject to annual review by JST, based on the University's implementation status and outcomes. As a result, **the support period or the amount of financial assistance may be shortened or reduced in future years.**

3 Number of Positions Available

This call for applications (April 2025) is open to students who wish to begin support from either:

- (i) October 2025 (Autumn Semester), or
- (ii) April 2026 (Spring Semester).

Applicants may only apply for one of these two options.

* Fourth-year doctoral students are only eligible if enrolled in the Course of Advanced Medical Science, Graduate School of Medicine.

(i) New Selections for Autumn 2025 Intake (Approx. 5 positions)

Status as of October 2025		Number of Positions
1st year of doctoral/latter doctoral program (D1)	1st or 2nd semester	Approx. 3–5
2nd year of doctoral/latter doctoral program (D2)	3rd or 4th semester	A few or none
3rd year of doctoral/latter doctoral program (D3)	5th or 6th semester	A small number or none
4th year of doctoral program (D4)*	7th or 8th semester	A small number or none

* Only students in the Course of Advanced Medical Science (doctoral program), Graduate School of Medicine are eligible to apply for D4.

(ii) New Selections for Spring 2026 Intake (Approx. 5 positions)

Status as of April 2026		Number of Positions
1st year of doctoral/latter doctoral program (D1)	1st or 2nd semester	Approx. 3–5
2nd year of doctoral/latter doctoral program (D2)	3rd or 4th semester	A few or none
3rd year of doctoral/latter doctoral program (D3)	5th or 6th semester	A small number or none
4th year of doctoral program (D4)*	7th or 8th semester	A small number or none

* Only students in the Course of Advanced Medical Science (doctoral program), Graduate School of Medicine are eligible to apply for D4.

Note

A separate call for the Autumn 2026 intake is scheduled to open around April 2026, with approximately 2 new positions available.

4 Research Fellowship Funding

The following financial support will be provided.

Please note that the amounts listed below are current estimates and may be subject to change.

- **Living Support (Equivalent to Living Expenses)**

2.4 million JPY/year (equivalent to 200,000 JPY/month)

Disbursed monthly to a student's personal bank account (Japan domestic accounts only), as registered with the University.

- **Research Funding**

420,000 JPY/year

Disbursed in full at the beginning of the supported academic year.

Notes

- The **living support** is considered “miscellaneous income” under Japanese tax law. It is therefore subject to **income and resident tax**, and recipients must file a tax return each year.

Applicants are also advised to consult with their legal guardians or family members, as the stipend may affect **health insurance eligibility and dependent status**.

- The research funding is treated as **public research funds**, and must be used in accordance with the University's internal budget and expenditure regulations. Specific rules for SACRA-funded expenditures may be established separately and must be followed.

5 Obligations of Supported Students

Students selected for SACRA support are required to comply with the following:

- 5.1 **Register with and consider applying to** the Job-based Research Internship system.

*The Job-based Research Internship is a long-term, paid program jointly operated by universities and industry, designed around job-oriented assignments.

- 5.2 **Register and update your career information** in the Doctoral Human Resource Database: Japan Graduate Database (JGRAD), maintained by the National Institute of Science and Technology Policy (NISTEP).

- 5.3 **Participate in the career development and training programs** designated by SACRA.

* Program details will be explained at the information session and available in the session recording.

- 5.4 **Submit an annual activity report** using the designated form provided by the program.

- 5.5 **Cooperate in SACRA-related outreach and publicity activities**, if requested by the University, to the extent that it does not interfere with your research activities.

- 5.6 **Respond to follow-up surveys** after the program ends.

Since SACRA is supported by JST's *Support for Pioneering Research Initiated by the Next Generation (SPRING)* program, follow-up surveys on employment status and other matters may be conducted for approximately 10 years after the completion of support.

- 5.7 **Complete designated research ethics training** (e.g., eAPRIN), pass the assessment, and refrain from any research misconduct or misuse of research funds.

- 5.8 **Agree to institutional rules and regulations** regarding intellectual property and related matters, as research funds will be granted for you all students to conduct independent research.

- 5.9 **Comply with other requirements** as determined necessary by the University.

- 5.10 Please note that **support may be suspended or revoked**, and repayment of funds may be required, if the student withdraws from the University, or in the event of research misconduct or misuse of research funds.

6 Application Procedure

The application period, procedures, selection schedule, and required documents are the same for both:

- (i) applicants wishing to begin support in October 2025 (Autumn Semester), and
- (ii) applicants wishing to begin support in April 2026 (Spring Semester).

Applicants may apply for only one of the two options.

6.1 **Application Period**

April 22 (Tue), 2025, 9:00 AM – May 26 (Mon), 2025, 3:00 PM (JST)

6.2 **Application Documents**

Please download the full set of application forms from the official website below:

<https://www.u-tokai.ac.jp/education-research/graduate/comprehensive-support/>

Before applying, you must **consult with your academic advisor and obtain their approval**.

6.3 **Submission Method**

Submit the completed application form and the signed consent form from your academic advisor to the following email address during the application period:

Email: sacra@tokai.ac.jp

6.4 **Notes**

- Follow all instructions provided in the application form templates.
- Once submitted, application materials cannot be modified. Incomplete applications will be reviewed as-is. Submitted materials will not be returned.
- As your application will be reviewed by evaluators from a wide range of disciplines, please ensure that your writing and presentations are clear and easy to understand.

6.5 **Handling of Personal Information**

Personal information collected during the application process will be used solely for the purposes of selection, notification of results, registration, and other related procedures.

Appropriate and necessary measures will be taken to prevent the leakage, loss, or misuse of such information.

Part or all of these administrative tasks may be outsourced. In such cases, proper confidentiality and data management will be required of the contractors through formal agreements.

7 **Selection Process**

7.1 **Screening Method**

The selection process consists of two stages:

- a **document review**, and
- an **interview** (interviews for students at regional campuses may be conducted

via Zoom).

Final decisions will be made based on a comprehensive evaluation.

Only those who pass the document review will be invited to the interview.

Notification of document screening results and interview scheduling will be sent by email.

Applicants who submit their application documents in English will, in principle, be interviewed in English.

* Requests to reschedule interviews will not be accepted for any reason.

* Waitlisted applicants may be offered a position if a selected candidate declines the offer.

7.2 Selection Schedule

- The document screening will take place from **late May to early June 2025**, followed by interviews in **mid to late June 2025**.
- Notification of results will be sent by email on **Thursday, July 17, 2025**.
- The program start dates are:
 - ☞ **October 1, 2025** for Autumn 2025 intake applicants
 - ☞ **April 1, 2026** for Spring 2026 intake applicants

Please note:

- Details regarding the submission of onboarding documents will be provided separately.
- You may be asked to submit income verification documents during the onboarding process.

8 Contact Information

SACRA Administrative Office, Tokai University

sacra@tokai.ac.jp

<https://www.u-tokai.ac.jp/education-research/graduate/comprehensive-support/>