Support for Pioneering Research
Initiated by the Next Generation（SPRING）

Development of Rhizome-Type Researchers
for Blooming of Interdisciplinary Knowledge

Application Guidelines

For:

(1) Prospective students enrolling in Spring 2026 or Fall 2026

(2) Students admitted in Spring 2025 or Fall 2025

> There have been changes from the previous support scheme.
> Please read this document carefully and apply only after fully
> understanding its purpose and details.

Osaka Metropolitan University
Doctoral Human Resources Development Support Office

February 2026

1. Purpose of the Project

Osaka Metropolitan University has been selected by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) and the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) for the Support for Pioneering Research Initiated by the Next Generation (SPRING), which provides support to doctoral students.

The University has promoted **"the Development of Rhizome-Type Researchers,"** aiming to develop doctoral education into a place for cultivating "comprehensive knowledge," where students actively absorb expertise from other fields and disciplines and organically integrate diverse specialized knowledge to solve social issues, create leading research domains, and identify and realize future visions of society.

Building upon this concept, the University supports outstanding doctoral students who aspire to become researchers with a broader perspective and contribute to the University's goal of establishing a "mature city creation hub with a multi-scale think tank function," as stated in the Program for Forming Japan's Peak Research Universities (J-PEAKS).

2. Eligibility

This support program targets doctoral students who were admitted in Spring 2025 or Fall 2025, or who plan to enroll in a 3-year or 4-year doctoral program in Spring 2026 or Fall 2026 (including those who have received an acceptance notification after taking the entrance examination for a graduate school of Osaka Metropolitan University, those who have already applied for admission, or those who are planning to apply for admission), **and who intend to obtain the doctoral degree within the standard study period (or within the approved period for those in a long-term enrollment).** <u>Before applying, be sure to consult with your prospective Supervisor.</u>

Notes
- For international students (mainly those staying in Japan under the "Student" residence status), Research Incentive Fund support will be provided only in FY2026. There will be no support from FY2027 onward.
- For working students (mainly those recognized as having stable and fixed income at a sufficient level equivalent to living expenses), Research Grant support will be provided (excluding Research Incentive Fund and Career Development and Training Content Funding).
- Students selected for the Program for Leading Graduate Schools (Graduate Course for System Inspired Leaders in Multidisciplinary Science (SiMS)) are eligible for a recommendation-based application scheme.

3. Support

Students selected for this SPRING program will receive:

- Research Incentive Fund (equivalent to living expenses): 2.1 million JPY per year
- Research Grant (for their own research activities): 100,000 JPY or 200,000 JPY per year (application-based)
- Career Development and Training Content Funding: application-based support

Details will be provided to selected students during the orientation session.

FY2026

Student Category	Research Incentive Fund	Research Grant	Career Development and Training Content
Japanese students	Provided	Provided	Provided
International student	Provided	Provided	Provided
Working students	**Not provided**	Provided	**Not provided**

After FY2027 and beyond

Student Category	Research Incentive Fund	Research Grant	Career Development and Training Content
Japanese students	Provided	Provided	Provided
International students	**Not provided**	Provided	Provided
Working students	**Not provided**	Provided	**Not provided**

4. Support Period and Eligible Students

1) **Support Period**
- Students admitted in Spring 2025: from April 1, 2026 until the end of the standard study period
- Students admitted in Fall 2025: from April 1, 2026 until the end of the standard study period
- Prospective students enrolling in Spring 2026: from April 1, 2026 until the end of the standard study period
- Prospective students enrolling in Fall 2026: from October 1, 2026 until the end of the standard study period

2) **Eligible Students**
- Students admitted in Spring 2025: selected through this screening process, enrolled in the program described in "2. Eligibility" as of April 2026, and not on leave of absence.
- Students admitted in Fall 2025: selected through this screening process, enrolled in the program described in "2. Eligibility" as of April 2026, and not on leave of absence.
- Prospective students enrolling in Spring 2026: selected through this screening process, enrolled in the program described in "2. Eligibility" as of April 2026, and not on leave of absence.
- Prospective students enrolling in Fall 2026: selected through this screening process, enrolled in the program described in "2. Eligibility" as of October 2026, and not on leave of absence.

● **Japanese Students**

Those who hold Japanese nationality, special permanent residents, or spouses of permanent residents, etc.

However, the following applicants are **not eligible**:

① Those receiving research funding from the Japanese government for a program with the same purpose as this program (Examples: JSPS Research Fellowship for Young Scientists, JST "Next-Generation AI Human Resources Development Program")

② Those recognized as having stable and fixed income at a sufficient level equivalent to living expenses (2.4 million JPY or more per year)

● **International Students**

Those staying in Japan under the "Student" residence status.

However, the following applicants are not eligible:

① Those receiving research funding from the Japanese government for a program with the same purpose as this program (Examples: JSPS Research Fellowship for Young Scientists, JST "Next-Generation AI Human Resources Development Program", JICA-sponsored international students, Young researcher development participants under the JST Japan–ASEAN Science, Technology and Innovation Collaborative Program)

② Those enrolled in graduate school while belonging to a domestic or overseas institution/corporation as an officer or employee, etc.

③ Those receiving a scholarship from their home country under the Japanese Government (MEXT) Scholarship Program.

＊ Applicants who fall under categories ② or ③ above may be eligible for support as working students.

● **Working Students**

Applicants who meet any of the following conditions:

① Those recognized as having stable and fixed income at a sufficient level equivalent to living expenses (2.4 million JPY or more per year), and who are employees of Japanese corporations, national public servants, local public servants, or employees of organizations other than companies

② Those affiliated only with overseas institutions/corporations, where the affiliation is with overseas universities or public research institutions (non-profit institutions/corporations), regardless of income

③ International students receiving scholarships from the Japanese government (MEXT Scholarship) who belong to the government, regardless of income

Notes

(1) For details of the above categories, please also refer to the "Category Decision Chart" and other information provided in the online application form described in Section 8, "How to Apply."

(2) Students selected for this SPRING program will not be eligible for the scholarship repayment exemption by the Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO) based on outstanding academic achievements.

(3) If doctoral students receive funding from other programs that cover only research expenses and do not cover living expenses, they may still be eligible for this SPRING program. However, applicants must confirm in advance with the implementing organizations of the concerned programs whether receiving support from multiple programs is permitted.

(4) The University may disclose the names, research topics, and career paths of supported students for internal information sharing and external communication purposes.

(5) Applicants with dual nationality may be classified as Japanese students if they hold Japanese nationality. For information on the selection of nationality under the Nationality Act for persons with dual nationality, please refer to the Ministry of Justice website.

(Reference) Selection of Nationality – Ministry of Justice website
https://www.moj.go.jp/MINJI/minji06.html

5. Responsibilities of Supported Students

This SPRING program aims to develop human resources who will contribute to "Japan's science, technology and innovation."

In line with this purpose, selected students will be required to fulfill certain responsibilities from the perspective of human resource development.

- Designating a Sub-supervisor (e.g., from another graduate school)
- Completing research ethics and compliance education
- Formulating implementation plans for Research Grant and Career Development and Training Content Funding (including the overall plan for the entire support period and annual budget plans)
- Reporting research progress at the semiannual research progress report meeting
- Planning domestic/overseas study or training by the end of the first fiscal year after the start of support (or by the end of the first semester for Fall entrants), and completing it within the standard study period
- Participating in the Interdisciplinary Research Exchange Meeting (participation by the Supervisor and Sub-supervisor is optional)
- Conducting mentor consultations twice per year
- Applying to the JSPS Research Fellowship for Young Scientists (DC) (mandatory for those who are eligible to apply)
- Completing designated coursework
- Participating in the "Future Roundtable Discussion"
- Responding to monitoring and follow-up surveys from JST and this program (including JGRAD registration)

Notes
Before applying, please refer to: https://www.omu.ac.jp/spring/
Applicants must fully understand the purpose of the program.
To fulfill these responsibilities, the understanding and support of the Supervisor is essential.
Applicants must obtain the consent of their prospective Supervisor before applying.
Depending on the applicant's activity status, support may be suspended or repayment may be required.

6. Number of Positions

- Students admitted in Spring 2025 / Fall 2025 (support begins April 2026):
  approx. 7 students
- Prospective students enrolling in Spring 2026 (support begins April 2026):
  approx. 74 students
  (Japanese students and international students: approx. 69; working students: approx. 5)
- Prospective students enrolling in Fall 2026 (support begins October 2026):
  approx. 4 students

7. Main Schedule

1) Application Period: February 4 (Wed), 2026 – February 28 (Sat), 2026, 23:59 (JST) Submission requires completion of the online application form, uploading the essay, and uploading an ID photo.
2) Interview Date Notification: By March 6 (Fri), 2026
   Notification will be sent to the email address provided in the application form.

3) Interview Period: <u>March 9 (Mon), 2026 – March 31 (Tue), 2026</u>
The interview of approximately 20 minutes will be scheduled within this period.
4) Announcement of Successful Applicants: <u>April 24 (Fri), 2026 (tentative)</u>
Successful applicants will be notified by email.
Inquiries regarding selection results by phone or email will not be accepted.

8.　How to Apply

1) Online application form: https://logoform.jp/form/JvkY/SPRING20260204
2) Enter your applicant information in the online form, and upload the SPRING application form (Form 1) and an ID photo.
3) Submission deadline: <u>February 28 (Sat), 2026, 23:59 (JST)</u>
* Applicants may use either the Japanese or English version of the application form (Form 1). Please submit one version in PDF format.
* File name format: Student ID_Graduate School Name_Full Name.pdf
If you do not have a Student ID yet, leave it blank.
* The application contains many required items and may take time.
　<u>Please apply well in advance. Late submissions will not be accepted.</u>
* Please refrain from submitting multiple entries during the application period.

Notes
(1) Applications with incomplete documents may not be accepted.
(2) Submitted documents will not be returned.
(3) Changes to documents are not permitted after submission.
(4) If any submitted information is found to be false, participation in this SPRING program may be revoked.
(5) Personal information will not be used for purposes other than selection.
(6) There is no fee for this selection process.

9.　Selection Process

1) Examination Details

Examination subjects	Score	Description
Written examination (Documents)	100 points	Write a short essay in accordance with the instructions provided in the SPRING Application Form (Form 1).
Oral examination * (Interview)	100 points	The interview will be conducted online. Applicants will give a presentation on the essay (application form) for about 7 minutes (PowerPoint etc. may be used), followed by a Q&A session of about 13 minutes.

* <u>Students selected for the Program for Leading Graduate Schools (Graduate Course for System Inspired Leaders in Multidisciplinary Science (SiMS)) will not be interviewed. They will be evaluated based on the essay only.</u>

2) Evaluation Method
Applicants will be evaluated based on the scoring results of the document screening and oral examination, in accordance with the evaluation criteria shown in the evaluation sheet.
Please refer to the next page for details of the rubric.

Rubric Evaluation Sheet for the Selection of Candidates in the SPRING Program

Evaluation Criteria		Not rated	Unacceptable	Marginal	Acceptable	Proficient	Exceptional
		0 point	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points	5 points
1	**Transferable skills** The applicant understands the importance of transferable skills and is willing to acquire them.	Not at all.	Not much.	Understands, but lacking detail.	Understands and can explain well.	Understands well and has a concrete plan in mind.	Understands well and is already taking concrete actions.
2	**Career path and contribution to society** The applicant is aware of his/her career path after completion of the course and how he/she wants to play an active role and contributes to society	Not at all.	Not much.	Has thought about it, but lacks detail.	Has thought about it and can explain.	Has thought about it and has a concrete plan.	Has thought about it and is already taking concrete actions.
3	**Interests beyond one's own research** The applicant has interests in fields outside his/her own research and is strongly motivated to understand and incorporate them.	Not at all.	Not much.	Yes, but lacks detail.	Highly motivated and can explain.	Highly motivated and has a concrete plan in mind.	Strongly motivated and is already taking concrete actions.
4	**Linking research to social issues and innovation** The applicant understands how to relate his/her research to solving social issues or creating innovative research areas.	Not at all.	Not much.	Understands, but lacks detail.	Understands and can explain.	Understands and has a concrete plan in mind.	Understands well and is already taking concrete actions.

10. Interview Date and Venue（Online）

- Interviews will be conducted during the period from March 9 (Mon), 2026 to March 31 (Tue), 2026, to confirm that applicants fully understand the purpose of this program.
- If there are time slots during which you cannot attend the interview due to valid reasons such as conference presentations, please specify those time slots in the designated section of the application form and provide the reason.
(You may be asked to submit supporting documents later.)
Please note that this does not guarantee that the interview will be scheduled outside the specified time slots.
- The interview duration is up to approximately 20 minutes. Applicants will give a presentation on the essay (application form) for about 7 minutes (PowerPoint etc. may be used), followed by a Q&A session of about 13 minutes.
- The interview schedule and Zoom URL will be sent to the email address provided in the application form by March 6 (Fri).
If you do not receive any notice by 16:30 on that day, please contact the email address listed in "12. Contact Information" by 17:00 on the same day.
- Students selected for the Program for Leading Graduate Schools (Graduate Course for System Inspired Leaders in Multidisciplinary Science (SiMS)) will not be interviewed. They will be evaluated based on the essay only.

Notes

(1) If interviews cannot be conducted as scheduled due to natural disasters, an "Urgent Notice" will be sent by email. Please check your email.

(2) The emergency contact on the interview day is the same as the "12. Contact Information" listed below.

11．Important Notes

Selection results for this SPRING program are not related to graduate school entrance examinations. Even if you pass this SPRING selection prior to admission, you are not exempted from the graduate school entrance examination.

This SPRING program does not provide tuition or admission fee reductions or subsidies. For other financial support programs at Osaka Metropolitan University, please contact the relevant office in charge.

Please note in advance that support details and support periods may be changed in accordance with government policies.

12. Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding this SPRING Program application, please contact us at the email address below. Please note that inquiries will be accepted by email only.
Thank you for your understanding.

Osaka Metropolitan University
Research Support Division, Doctoral Human Resources Development Support Office
Email: gr-knky-2024dss@omu.ac.jp

(1)-1 Describe your research, including <u>the purpose</u>, <u>methodology</u>, <u>content,</u> and <u>the characteristics and originality of your research</u> (such as comparisons with previous studies, anticipated impact upon completion, and future prospects) in a concise and easily understandable manner. Use language that can be understood by individuals from different fields. (Approximately 800 words)

If figures or tables are used, please place them together on the final page.

(Word Count：)

(1)-2　Describe in detail <u>what your research aims to clarify, and to what extent, before obtaining your degree</u>. (Approximately 400 words)

(Word Count：　)

(2)　Describe in detail how your research is connected to the following items:
<u>(1) solving social issues, (2) creating pioneering research fields, (3) creating future society, or a combination of these</u>. (Approximately 400 words)

(Word Count：　)

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(3) Describe concisely and specifically which fields outside your research area interest you, in relation to your future career, the social implementation of your research, and the development of broad, interdisciplinary knowledge. This is not merely about improving the efficiency or accuracy of your research. Explain how you intend to expand your research theme and incorporate interdisciplinary studies into your career. (Approximately 350 words)

(Word Count：)

(4) Describe your thoughts on your career path after completing the doctoral program and how you hope to contribute and play an active role in society in the future, from the perspective of "how you can contribute to Japan's science, technology, and innovation." (Approximately 350 words)

Reference: *The Basic Plan on Science and Technology and the Basic Plan on Science, Technology and Innovation – Science and Technology Policy – Cabinet Office, Government of Japan* https://www8.cao.go.jp/cstp/kihonkeikaku/index6.html

(Word Count：)

(5) Describe concisely and specifically which transferable skills you think are necessary to achieve the goals mentioned in (4) and how you plan to acquire them. (Approximately 350 words)

(Word Count：)

If figures or tables are used, please put them on this page. Include figure/table numbers and captions to clearly indicate where they are referenced in this application form.