

Q & A

If there are major updates on this Q&A, it will be announced on the following website.

<https://www.jst.go.jp/kisoken/boshuu/teian-en.html>

For information related to the operation of the Cross-ministerial R&D Management System (e-Rad), registration of research institutions and researchers, and use of the e-Rad system, please refer to the following website:

<https://www.e-rad.go.jp/en/>

○ Enrolling in the educational program for research integrity

Content of the educational program for research integrity

Q What content must be included in the educational program for research integrity conducted by affiliated institutions?

A Educational programs for research integrity are the responsibility of each research institution. JST does not specify the specific teaching material to be used in such programs. In each research institution, it is acceptable to undergo a research ethics education program or training deemed equivalent to the following. If a research institution determines something to be equivalent, the video materials provided by JST titled 'Gaps in Ethics ' are also recognized as valid.

- “eAPRIN” provided by APRIN, Association for the Promotion of Research Integrity
- “eL CoRE” provided by JSPS, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science
- “For the Sound Development of Science -The Attitude of a Conscientious Scientist-” provided by JSPS, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science
- “Responsible Research Practices to Learn from Cases” provided by AMED, Japan Agency for Medical Research and Development
- “A Compendium of Near-Miss Incidents Related to Research Integrity” provided by AMED, Japan Agency for Medical Research and Development

(Reference)

According to the “Guidelines for Responding to Misconduct in Research Activities” (August 26, 2014, adopted by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology), which were effective as of April 2015, research institutions are required to implement a structure for preventing misconduct—such as the installation of a “Research Integrity Education Manager”—and conduct education at the institutional level. Further, the allocating institution is also required to confirm researcher enrollment in the institution’s research integrity education program.

Note, however, that the details in the referenced guidelines focus on misconduct related to academic papers and does not cover bioethics and conflicts of interest, which are different topics. If you have any questions, please contact the JST Office of Research Integrity.

Japan Science and Technology Agency Department of Audit and Legal Affairs, Research Integrity Division E-mail : rcr-kousyu@jst.go.jp
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Program completion certification

Q Is it necessary to submit documentation certifying completion of an educational program for research integrity?

A No, submission is not necessary.

About taking the digest version of eAPRIN (ex-CITI Japan)

Q Is it necessary to declare the attendance confirmation number when you take the eAPRIN (ex-CITI Japan) digest version through JST when it is difficult to take a research ethical education program at the institution?

A There is no need to declare the course confirmation card for applications for CREST, PRESTO, and ACT-X. Please select "eAPRIN (ex-CITI Japan) digest version completed" in the input field of the course status in e-Rad system.

Availability of an English version of the eAPRIN (ex-CITI Japan) e-learning program digest version

Q Since I have not taken the program offered by my institution, I am planning to enroll in the digest version of eAPRIN (ex-CITI Japan) e-learning program. What options are there if my native language is not Japanese, which makes taking the course in Japanese difficult?

A An English translation of the digest version of eAPRIN (ex-CITI Japan) e-learning program has been published and posted on the Invitation for Proposal website.

Regarding the deadline for completing the educational program for research integrity

Q I cannot complete the educational program for research integrity before the application deadline. Can I complete the program after the deadline?

A Completion of the educational program for research integrity is a prerequisite for applying. Enrollment and completion of this program will not be permitted after the solicitation deadline.

○ **Common issue for CREST, PRESTO, and ACT-X**

Responding to the fiscal year 2024 Call for Proposals

Q When submitting a research proposal, is an approval of the institution with which I am affiliated required?

A No, it is not required. However, if your proposal is selected, a Research Contract will have to be signed by both JST and the research institution with which you are affiliated, so please notify your institution in prior ("5.2.7 Responsibilities of Research Institutions").

Q Why are duplicate application restrictions applied between JST and AMED's Strategic Basic Research Programs?

A The target programs are based on a program of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's Strategic Basic Research Programs, which promotes strategic basic research under strategic or R & D goals, although the executing agency is divided into JST and AMED. For this reason, duplicate application restrictions are applied between the two organizations.

Use of color in research proposals

Q Is it possible to use color for the text or figures in research proposals? Do evaluators evaluate research proposals in color document?

A Evaluators do evaluate color document in their assessment of research proposals. However, proposals may be printed out from PDF files, so we request you to use figures and tables that are easy to read even at low resolutions.

Research Achievements

Q Can I also write a proceedings paper?

A Important proceedings papers can also be listed as research achievements. Especially in the information and security research fields, its importance is being touted. For details, please refer to the final report of the Cybersecurity Research and Industry-Academia-Government Collaboration Strategy Working Group of the Cabinet Cybersecurity Center.

(March 12, 2021 Cybersecurity Strategy Headquarters Research and Development Strategy Special Committee Research/Industry-Academia-Government Collaboration Strategy Working Group Cybersecurity Research/Industry-Academia-Government Collaboration Strategy Working Group)

<https://www.nisc.go.jp/conference/cs/pdf/kenkyuwg-saishu.pdf>

“Information on Other Supports” of Research Proposal Application

Q It says that it includes foreign institutions. What should be specifically described about the research funds that plan to accept or apply for from overseas institutions?

A At the time of application, researchers will be asked to fill in a wide range of research expenses that they are applying for and will accept, so competitive funding, subsidies from private foundations, contract research expenses from companies, joint research expenses, etc. Please be sure to fill in all research funds accepted from foreign institutions. Due to unavoidable circumstances, e.g. confidentiality agreement, it is possible to submit without filling in the items other than effort. Noted that the research proposal will be provided to outside experts during the review process.

Requirements for applicants

Q What is the status regarding research proposals submitted by female researchers?

A Female researchers comprise 5–10 % (CREST), 10–20% (PRESTO), and 15-30% (ACT-X) of applicants and selectees.

Q In regard to advancing diversity, what initiatives are being undertaken within the Strategic Basic Research Programs?

A In the hope of encouraging research proposal submissions from a broad spectrum of researchers, JST is actively trying to improve the environment where researchers can give full play to their abilities. As a part of the activities, Strategic Basic Research Programs have special sites for the promotion of diversity. Data on selected female researchers are publicly available on this website.

Activities to promote diversity in CREST and PRESTO are announced on

<https://www.jst.go.jp/kisoken/crest/nadeshiko/index.html>

JST is continuously trying to improve its programs and research environment so as to make individual researchers (PIs: Principal Investigators) possible to give full play to their ability and enjoy active roles. Please refer to the JST diversity website:

<https://www.jst.go.jp/diversity/en/index.html>

About Research Budget description in the Research Proposal

Q For the “Total Budget” (CREST - Form 1, PRESTO - Form 1, ACT-X – Form 1) and “Research Budget plan by group” (CREST - Form 5) stated in the research proposal, a contract research agreement must be concluded.

Should the amount including the indirect costs (the overhead costs) to be paid to the research institution be included?

A Indirect costs are not included in the Research Proposal. Please list only direct costs.

Overhead Costs (Indirect Costs)

Q Is support for covering overhead costs (indirect costs) paid to all research institutions that sign a Research Contract?

A In principle, an amount equal to 30% of research costs (direct costs) is paid to all research institutions that sign a Research Contract. This amount covers overhead costs (indirect costs).

Q What types of expenditures are counted as overhead costs (indirect costs)?

A Overhead costs (indirect costs) include expenditures for improving the research environment for participants in research projects implemented under CREST, PRESTO and ACT-X programs and money used by research institutions to cover expenditures required to enhance their overall functions.

Use of Research Budgets

Q Is it possible to subcontract program preparation and other such work to external companies, etc.?

A If it is required as a matter of advancing research work, it is possible. However, there is a premise that such subcontracting of work to outside parties is based on subcontracting agreements that exclude research and development work. In principle, the subcontracting of research and development work is not permitted.

Personnel Transfers after Proposal Selection

Q If a PI (CREST, PRESTO or ACT-X) experiences a change in position (promotion, transfer to a different research institution, etc.) while conducting research, will the PI be permitted to continue research activities?

A As long as it is possible to continue research activities unhindered by the change in position, research activities may be continued. Having another person take over as PI as a result of a change in position, however, is not permitted.

Q If a research institution affiliation changes because of a personnel transfer, for example, as research is being conducted, is it possible to move research equipment, etc., purchased with research funds to the new research institution?

A Equipment, etc., purchased with funds accounted for as research costs (direct costs) must, in principle, be moved, via transfer of ownership, etc., to the new research institution in accordance with a Research Contract.

Others

Q Who is the Program Officer (PO) for the program? What roles does the PO perform?

A For the CREST, PRESTO, and ACT-X programs, the Research Supervisor is the PO designated for competitive funding systems. For information on the roles played by the Research Supervisor, refer to “2.1.1 CREST Overview,” “3.1.1 PRESTO Overview,” and “4.1.1 ACT-X Overview.”

Q Please provide information on the research topics selected and applications submitted for the previous fiscal year.

A Please refer to the JST websites below.

- CREST <https://www.jst.go.jp/kisoken/crest/en/application/index.html>
- PRESTO <https://www.jst.go.jp/kisoken/presto/en/application/index.html>
- ACT-X <https://www.jst.go.jp/kisoken/act-x/en/index.html>

Q At present, I am affiliated with an overseas research institution and do not have a researcher number. How should I register for e-Rad when applying as a CREST Joint Research Group or PRESTO (not JST employed) Researcher?

A Please arrange e-Rad registration for overseas Co-PIs and PRESTO Researchers by yourself under “Worker: Proposer” and “Registration Details: Researcher Information.” Please prepare a researcher registration application form and a picture of personal identification (passport, driver's license, my number card, health insurance card, etc.), and apply for registration by the applicant via "new registration method" for researchers . For more details, refer to Application Guidelines “10.4.1 Pre-registration of research institution and researcher information” and the e-Rad portal site.

<https://www.e-rad.go.jp/en/researcher/index.html>

* In principle, researchers affiliated with overseas research institutions cannot be the CREST CO-PIs. For detail, please refer “2.2.6 Proposal Submission Requirements” of the Application Guidelines and “Items for CREST” of this Q&A

Q At present, I am affiliated with an overseas research institution. When applying as a CREST Joint Research Group or PRESTO (not JST employed) Researcher, can I use the e-Rad researcher number obtained when I was affiliated with a Japanese domestic research institution in the past?

A If you have already obtained an e-Rad researcher number and are currently able to apply, it is no problem to apply with that number. In that case, details of the registered institution with which you were affiliated in the past may

be displayed in the system. Please enter your current affiliated institution in the entry field for “individual items”.

After selection, JST will register the affiliated institution.

* In principle, researchers affiliated with overseas research institutions cannot be the CREST CO-PIs. For detail, please refer “2.2.6 Proposal Submission Requirements” of the Application Guidelines and “Items for CREST” of this Q&A

Q I am not able to temporarily store my research proposal on the e-Rad system.

A Unless you fill in all items in “Application,” you cannot store information temporarily. Modification of the input data is possible, so fill in all the items with temporary information first; then, temporary storage will be possible.

Q If the date of the interview scheduled as part of the selection process is inconvenient, is it possible for someone else be interviewed in my place? Alternatively, is it possible to schedule a different interview date?

A It is not possible to have someone else interviewed in your place. In addition, since, interview dates are set by coordinating the schedules of numerous evaluators, securing a different interview date is not possible. Please check the interview period information shown in “(2) Call and Selection Schedule” in the first section “Overview of the Call for Research Application” of this document and also the interview schedules for individual Research Areas which will be announced on the “Call for Research Proposals” website (<https://www.jst.go.jp/kisoken/boshuu/teian-en.html>).

○ Items for CREST

Entering Research Costs in Proposals

Q Is it necessary to include in the research proposal: 1) the basis for cumulated research costs and 2) yearly budgets?

A It is not necessary to include the bases for cumulated research costs, but an itemized research budget and the research budget for the entire research group should be included in the Research Proposal (Form 5). In addition, applications which are selected for participation in the interview phase of the selection process will be asked to prepare supplementary materials covering various matters, including details of research expenditures.

Research Organization and Budget Allocation

Q Please give inappropriate examples of Joint Research Group organization and Joint Research Group budget allocations which would be unacceptable.

A Unacceptable formation of Joint Research Groups include (but are not limited to) followings:
1) The PI does not play the central role in the research organization to pursue the proposed research initiative; 2)

A substantial portion of the research is subcontracted to an external party or parties; 3) The role and position of the Joint Research Group in the research initiative is unclear; and 4) The budget is allocated equally to the Joint Research Groups without considering their roles and positions.

Q Is it possible to change the research project organization and total budget, which were presented in the research proposal at the interview screening process?

A No, please do not change the contents of the research proposal since selections are conducted based on these contents. Please be very careful to create a research proposal that you will not change later. It should be noted, though, that after the selection process, changes may be requested in accordance with the instructions of the Research Supervisor.

Applicant Requirements

Q Is it possible for non-full-time researchers (guest researchers, etc.) to submit research proposals? Also, is it possible for researchers scheduled to retire during the research period to submit proposals?

A Both are possible if you can establish your own research project organization at a domestic (located in Japan) research institution during the research period and the research institution could conclude a Research Contract with JST.

Research Team Organization

Q Could “PI”, who is currently performing a PRESTO research, be included in the research project organization – as a Co-PI – for the CREST research proposal?

A From FY2022 applications, it is possible for active PRESTO or ACT-X PIs to participate as a CREST Co-PI. However, once an applicant becomes a selection candidate, adjustments such as reductions in research costs may occur depending on factors such as research content and scale. Please refer to “Chapter 9 Limitations on Multiple Applications within the Strategic Basic Research Programs” for details.

Q Can researchers affiliated with industrial companies join a research organization as Co-PIs or other research participants?

A Yes, it is possible. Concluding a Research Contract with JST is required to be a Co-PI. See also “5.2.8 Responsibilities of Research Institutions” of the Application Guidelines.

Research Site

Q What criteria will be used to determine whether the performance of research would be impractical if not done at a foreign institution?

A Decision concerning whether research must be performed overseas are assumed as following.

- 1 . Required facilities do not exist in Japan and have been installed only in foreign institution.
- 2 . Field studies that can be performed only at overseas are required.
- 3 . Research materials can be obtained only at a foreign research institution or foreign location and cannot be brought to Japan.

Research Cost

Q After a research proposal is selected, how should the allocation of research expenditures within the team be decided?

A Once a research proposal is selected, allocation of research expenditures within the team are determined based on the research plan prepared every fiscal year. For more information on research plans, please refer to "5.2.1 Research Plan Preparation."

Research Contract

Q Would a Research Contract with Co-PIs be subcontracted¹ from the research institution with which the PI is affiliated?

A In this program, Research Contract are not subcontracts. JST contracts separately with each of research institutions with which the PI and Co-PIs are affiliated.

Research Evaluations

Q How is research evaluated and how will the evaluation results be utilized?

A In principle, CREST research projects undergo an:

- 1) Interim evaluation around three years after they begin,
and an
- 2) Ex-post evaluation at the end of the research period.

For more information, please refer to "5.2.4 Project Evaluations". In addition, "Research Areas" are evaluated ("5.2.5 Research Area Evaluation") as well as "follow-up evaluations" which take place after a certain amount

¹ "Subcontract" in the research contract means that JST concludes a research contract with a research institution with which the Research Director is affiliated and the said institution concludes another research contract with a research institution with which a joint researcher is affiliated.

of time has passed after the completion of the research period. All evaluation results will be posted on the website.

Multiple Applications

Q Is it possible to make a CREST research proposal as a PI and participate in another research proposal as a Co-PI?

A This is possible, but if both proposals come to be considered seriously for selection, research funding may be lowered or the researcher in question may be asked to participate in only one of the research projects, depending on factors like the details and scale of the research to be performed. It should be noted that having researchers swap roles as PI and Co-PI and submitting multiple research proposals is not permitted. For more details, please refer to "Chapter 9 Limitations on Multiple Applications within the Strategic Basic Research Programs".

Q I have been adopted for AMED-CREST or PRIME of AMED, and can I apply for CREST, PRESTO, or ACT-X?

A From FY2020 applications, it is not possible to apply to be a CREST PI or PRESTO/ACT-X PI when engaged in AMED's AMED-CREST or PRIME research. Please refer to "Chapter 9 Limitations on Multiple Applications within the Strategic Basic Research Programs" for details.

○ Items for PRESTO

Requirements for Applicants

Q Does the PRESTO program have an age limit?

A There is no particular age limit for submitting PRESTO research proposals. However, research is performed mainly by researchers in their 30s and it is expected that PRESTO can help to boost the careers of such researchers.

Q Could students apply?

A Yes, he/she can apply. A requirement is, however, that the student participate in PRESTO will end the status of being a student by the end of March in the following year after if his/her proposal is selected. Concerning the way how to obtain e-Rad ID, refer to Q&A of issues for ACT-X.

Q Can researchers engaged in ACT-X research apply to PRESTO?

A Yes, application is possible. However, if selected, ACT-X research will finish at the end of that academic year. In addition, when applying to PRESTO while engaged in ACT-X research (including during the Acceleration Phase), please notify the JST (ACT-X area manager) and your supervisor to that end.

Q Is it possible for non-full-time researchers (guest researchers, etc.) to submit research proposals?

A The PRESTO program has no restrictions in terms of the institutional affiliations or positions of applicants. Whether an applicant is a full-time employee of a research institution or not, or paid or not, is not considered in the selection process. PRESTO full-time researchers must have a full-time employment relationship with the research institution, be covered by employment regulations, and work under the discretionary labor system.

Q Is it possible to submit a PRESTO research proposal while participating in a CREST research project as a Co-PI?

A From FY2022, it becomes possible to be a PRESTO PI and a CREST Co-PI at the same time (including cases in which the researcher is already participating as a CREST Co-PI and a PRESTO application then being selected, as well as cases in which PRESTO for which one is personally applying and CREST for which participation is planned as Co-PI are both selected at the same time). However, once an applicant becomes a selection candidate, adjustments such as reductions in research costs may occur depending on factors such as research content and scale (excluding research finishing in the 2024 academic year). Please refer to “Chapter 9 Limitations on Multiple Applications within the Strategic Basic Research Programs” for details. Please also consider your application after consulting with the CREST PI in advance.

Q Can a Special Researcher at the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science apply to the PRESTO program?

A There are no restrictions on the applicant's position at the time of application. Researchers who are currently performing work under the system of an institution other than JST, or who will apply to do so, should ask that institution whether it is appropriate to perform the work under its system and the PRESTO program, concurrently.

Q If I am a researcher (post-doctoral fellow) with a doctoral degree (but only a Japanese national) and I am proposing to conduct research at an overseas research institution, etc., can I apply to PRESTO?

A You are permitted to apply. However, if you are employed by an overseas project or program, other research activities may be restricted, so please confirm with the research institution that you can conduct PRESTO research before applying.

Research Cost

Q Is it necessary to include in the research proposal: 1) The bases for cumulated research costs and 2) Yearly budgets?

A It is not necessary. However, those selected for participation in the interview phase of the selection process will be asked to prepare supplementary materials covering matters like details of research expenditures.

Requirements for Performing Research Work at an Overseas Research Institution

Q What are the requirements for performing research work at an overseas research institution?

A Please contact to person in charge of contract in the foreign institute for prior consent since there are requirements such as conclusion of a research contract with conditions indicated by JST is needed. (Please also check PRESTO-Form 6)

*Refer to “References” in the “How to apply” section of the following website

<https://www.jst.go.jp/kisoken/boshuu/teian/en/top/ryoiki.html>

Particular attention should be paid to the three points below.

1. Appropriate expense execution shall be possible based on the research expense execution guidelines specified by JST.
2. Payment of indirect expenses to the relevant overseas research institution does not exceed 30% of direct expenses (research expenses).
3. It shall be possible to submit to JST English-language cost statements showing the details of research expenditures (equivalent to the account books used by Japanese institutions).

Research Agreement may cannot be concluded if foreign institute does not accept above condition.

Please refer to “3.2.6 Proposal Submission Requirements” for details.

Please also note that PRESTO PI personnel expenses cannot be disbursed from PRESTO research costs.

* Researchers affiliated with overseas research institutions are exempt from “Measures for Strategic Basic Research Programs (CREST, PRESTO, ACCEL, ACT-X) Related to the “Use of Direct Costs for Principal Investigator (PI) Personnel Expenses (revised June 3, 2022, JST Department of Innovation Research).”

https://www.jst.go.jp/kisoken/crest/manual/pi_houshin.pdf

In addition, "Regarding the response of Strategic Basic Research Programs (CREST, PRESTO, ACCEL, ACT-X) regarding the ``Review to make it possible to pay agency expenses for work other than research from direct cost (introduction of a buyout system)" (Revised on June 3, 2022) is also not covered at this time.

https://www.jst.go.jp/kisoken/crest/manual/buyout_houshin.pdf

Employment of Researchers with Doctoral Degrees

Q Under the PRESTO program, is it possible to employ additional researcher with a doctoral degree (a postdoc)?

A Under the PRESTO program, it is not possible to create a research team including postdocs. However, postdocs can be employed as research assistants to support the efforts of a PI pursuing PRESTO research.

Other

Q Is it possible to suspend and later resume PRESTO research in response to life events (childbirth, child care, and care giving)?

A If a life event occurs during the research period, in principle, PRESTO PI may suspend research work for the same period of time as the leave period at his/her institution and later resume work. We also have a support system aimed at continuing research at life events. For details, please refer to the following website.

<https://www.jst.go.jp/kisoken/crest/nadeshiko/index.html>

Q I am currently assigned or am planned to be assigned from my affiliated institution to another institution. Is it possible to conduct PRESTO research at my assigned research institution?

A It is possible to conduct research at an institution other than that to which you are affiliated. However, when executing research costs at the institution where research is actually carried out, JST will conclude a Research Contract with the institution actually conducting research (Note that receiving consent from the institution where research is conducted is a precondition of PIs arranging of their own volition an assigned institution to conduct research). In terms of the e-Rad account, using either the affiliated or assigned institution is possible when applying, but please enter the research institution with which concluding the Research Contract is planned in the entry field for entering the Research Institution under the e-Rad individual particulars.

Q Is it possible to conduct PRESTO research remotely while myself living overseas (outside Japan) after nominating a Japanese domestic institution as the institution for carrying out PRESTO research (exclusive assigned institution)?

A If the researcher themselves is living overseas even though a Japanese domestic institution is the institution for carrying out PRESTO research, it is crucial to build a complete structure for thorough information management and security export control systems at the assigned institution. Personnel management of the researcher also needs to be carried out according to the laws of the country of residence. Therefore, carrying out PRESTO research as an exclusive appointee is possible at a Japanese domestic assigned institution only if the JST deems that the following three conditions are satisfied:

(1) An appropriate personnel management structure is in place in accordance with the laws of the jurisdiction of residence, such as facilities for carrying out research being provided at the satellite office etc. in the country of residence

(2) In light of the cross-border flow of information taking place, sound network security is fully implemented to ensure that thorough security export control systems are provided

(3) Systems are in place at the assigned institution so that research costs can be executed and managed remotely from overseas, and the assigned institution has consented to research taking place overseas

*Those who are not JST employed Researchers may also carry out research overseas under the responsibility of their affiliated institution while paying heed to (1) to (3) above.

Q Should personnel cost for PRESTO PI of Exclusive Appointment come from research expense? How much is the approximate cost?

A Personnel cost for PRESTO PI of Exclusive Appointment is not out of research expense. JST will pay directly to the PI as a salary based on JST regulations. Specific salary amounts will be informed individually when the notification of working conditions is issued.

○ **Items for ACT-X**

Requirements for Applicants

Q Does the ACT-X program have an age limit?

A No. There is no limitation on age. However, this program is intended for researchers who have held a doctoral degree for less than eight years as of April 1, 2024

Researchers who earned their bachelor's degrees less than 13 years ago (as of April 1, 2024) if they have not acquired doctoral degrees.

*This includes researchers who satisfy the described terms and conditions when the period of maternity or paternity leave taken after acquiring the degree is excluded.

Graduate school students are also invited to our program regardless of the terms and conditions described above.

Q Can university students apply?

A Only post-graduate students can apply.

Q Is it possible for non-full-time researchers (guest researchers, etc.) to submit research proposals?

A It is a condition of application that the applicant himself/herself (in the case of this person who cannot be a party to research contract due to the regulations of the affiliated institution, his or her academic supervisor, etc.) is able to be the "research manager" of the Research Contract.

Q I belong to a company, but I do not have a doctorate. Can I apply for the program?

A You can apply if you are a bachelor for less than 13 years as of April 1, 2024. However, it is required that the Research Contract between the organization the researcher belongs to and JST should be able to specify the applicant him- or herself as the "Principal Investigator".

Q How do I know if I have the authority to execute a contract research fund or can be a party to a Research Contract?

A In the form of the Research Contract template (<https://www.jst.go.jp/contract/index2.html>), become a "Principal Investigator" and become a registered researcher of the affiliated institution to determine whether or not it is possible to conclude the Research Contract with JST and whether or not it is possible to execute the contract research fund by itself based on the cosigned Research Contract. Please check with the secretariat. For non-students, first coordinate with the academic supervisor and the affiliated institution so that you have executive authority and be a party to the Research Contract (See 4.2.6 "Proposal Submission Requirements"). Please contact JST if there is anything you are unsure about at the stage of coordinating with your institution.

Q I have been a doctor for less than 8 years as of April 1, 2024, but have been a bachelor for more than 13 years. May I apply for the program?

A Given that you are a doctor, the number of years being a bachelor does not matter. You can apply for the program if you have held a doctor for less than 8 years. However, you should know that the Research Areas of ACT-X are intended for the development and production of young researchers; thus, one of our norms for the selection is that your proposal should conform to the intention of the Research Areas.

Q If I belong to multiple institutions, which institution should I apply for?

A Please apply under the affiliation of the institution that actually executes the ACT-X contract research funds.

Q I am a student, but I am conducting research at a research institute other than the university I belong to. In this case, which affiliation should I apply for?

A You have to apply under the affiliation of the institution that will actually execute the ACT-X contract research funds. JST concludes Research Contract with organizations that execute ACT-X research funds. Please apply after coordinating with the university and research institution to which you belong, which institution will be responsible for the ACT-X research expenses when adopted. If you plan to use the ACT-X research funds at an institution other than the university to which you belong, please apply under the affiliation of that institution. Please check it with someone equivalent to your academic supervisor and submit it. Also, in this case, it is necessary to hold a position at the institution after the adoption when concluding the Research Contract. Please note that if you are not assigned a position, you may not be able to conclude a Research Contract and conduct ACT-X research.

Q I am a company working doctoral student. Should I apply with a university or company affiliation?

A You can apply as either position, however in principle, please apply from an organization that you will actually conduct the research. If you will apply as the doctoral student position of the university, you have to submit the Memorandum of Confirmation as well. Please note that all of the research areas of ACT-X are intended to develop and produce young researchers, and one of the selection criteria is that it matches the purpose of the research area. In addition, a contract with JST will be concluded with a research implementation organization in principle.

Q Is it possible to submit an ACT-X research proposal and participate as a Co-PI in a CREST research project?

A From FY2022, it is possible to be a ACT-X PI and a CREST Co-PI at the same time (including cases in which the researcher is already participating as a CREST Co-PI and a ACT-X application then being selected, as well as cases in which ACT-X for which one is personally applying and CREST for which participation is planned as Co-PI are both selected at the same time). However, once an applicant becomes a selection candidate, adjustments such as reductions in research costs may occur depending on factors such as research content and scale (excluding research finishing in the FY2024). Please refer to “Chapter 9 Limitations on Multiple Applications within the Strategic Basic Research Programs” for details. Please also consider your application after consulting with the CREST PI in advance.

Q I am currently a PRESTO researcher and is it still possible for me to apply to ACT-X?

A You cannot apply to ACT-X. (For detail, please refer to “Chapter 9 Limitations on Multiple Applications within the Strategic Basic Research Programs”)

Q Can research fellow (PD, DC) at the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science apply to the ACT-X program?

A There are no restrictions on the applicant's position at the time of application. Researchers who are currently performing work under the system of an institution other than JST, or who will apply to do so, should ask your affiliated institution whether it is appropriate to perform a work under its system and the ACT-X program concurrently.

Q What if I was expecting to continue the research at a research institute in this country until I finish the ACT-X research, but I happen to transfer to another research institute overseas before I finish the research, which implies that I have difficulty in continuing the research. Should the research be canceled?

A If you cannot meet the ACT-X requirement, the research will be terminated.

Q Can I apply for ACT-X even when I am planning to study abroad?

A Application is possible. However, if the affiliated institution (domestic research institution) cannot conclude a contract research agreement while studying abroad, ACT-X research cannot be carried out during that period. Please keep this in mind when applying (ACT-X cannot conclude Research Contract research with overseas institutions). Please however also enter the fact that you are planning to study abroad and the period, destination, and status of discussions with the affiliated institution in the other special remarks section of the Application “Reasons for application (when making multiple applications in the same research area), points of difference and planned changes from previous applications, other special remarks, etc.”. We will check if ACT-X research is possible as part of the selection process.

Research Cost Description

Q Is it necessary to include in the research proposal: 1) The bases for cumulated research costs and 2) Yearly budgets?

A It is not necessary. However, those selected for participation in the interview phase of the selection process will be asked to prepare supplementary materials covering matters like details of research expenditures.

Details that Should be Included in the Project Description

Q Do I have to give the project description for the acceleration phase in the research proposal?

A No. you do not. Please give the project description for the 2 years and 6 months in the research proposal.

Execution of Research Cost

Q I am a JSPS special researcher, but if I am selected, I can apply for "Additional budget support such as research assistant (RA) to ACT-X student (doctor / master) researcher". ?

A A student (DC) can apply, but a non-student PD (PD) cannot. Please check with the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science to confirm if there is no problem applying for ACT-X from the position of a Research Fellow (DC).

Employment of Researchers with Doctoral Degrees

Q Under the ACT-X program, is it possible to employ another researcher with a doctoral degree (a postdoc)?

A Under the ACT-X program, it is not possible to create a research team including postdocs. However, postdocs can be employed as research assistants to support the efforts of a PI.

(Applications by Students) Preliminary Discussions with your affiliated Institution

Q I am a student. Is there anything that I have to discuss with the university I am affiliated to with the course of making an application?

A First of all, it is necessary that the institution with which you are affiliated can conclude a Research Contract with JST. Please refer to the following web page to see the format for the Research Contract:

<https://www.jst.go.jp/contract/index2.html>

Furthermore, as stated in Special Clause 4 of Appendix 8-2, it is essential that an understanding is required between the affiliated institution and you regarding the treatment of any discoveries etc. that are made.

Furthermore, it is stipulated that the responsibility for the management or, should it arise, any misuse of research funds lies with not only with you but also with your academic supervisors under the Research Contract. Your academic supervisors are required to submit a memorandum of confirmation giving their consent for the above, and you must submit the memorandum together with the research proposal.

The form of memorandum of confirmation can be downloaded from the following website. You and your academic supervisor are requested to sign the document, save it in a PDF format and submit it together with the research proposal via e-Rad.

<https://www.jst.go.jp/kisoken/boshuu/teian/en/top/ryoiki.html>

※Please click the name of Research Area which you are going to apply. Forms can be downloaded from “How to apply” section on the website

(Applications by Students) Continuation of ACT-X Research after Taking Up Employment

Q I am a student. If I become employed by a company etc. midway through my research, can I continue with the ACT-X research?

A In order to continue pursuing your ACT-X research you need to obtain the consent of your place of employment for simultaneously carrying out the work of your employers and the ACT-X research. Moreover, if the place where you conduct your research is your place of employment, a Research Contract has to be drawn up between your employers and JST. You can continue to carry on your ACT-X research when your employer's consent to both of these conditions have been obtained.

(Applications by Students) Description in the Research Contract in the case that the PI does not have the authority to execute the Research Cost

Q I am a student. After discussions with my institution, it has become clear that I am unable to have the authority to execute contract research funds and I cannot become a party to the Research Contract. In that case, who will be listed in the Research Contract as the person conducting the research?

A The names of the academic supervisor etc., as research manager, and the applicant (student), as research leader, will both be listed in the Research Contract.

(Applications by Students) Graduation during the ACT-X Research Period

Q I am a student. I am going to graduate during my 2.5 year research period. In this case, should I just conduct research work before graduation?

A Please accomplish your 2.5 year research period. Consult with your academic supervisors to obtain academic post and continue your research work. If you worked hard to obtain academic post but failed and became difficult to continue ACT-X research, please immediately consult with JST.

(Applications by Students) Responsibility of Academic Supervisors

Q I am an academic supervisor. One of my students is considering applying for the ACT-X program and I would like to know to what extent academic supervisors are responsible for it.

A Under the Research Contract between JST and the affiliated institution to which the student is affiliated, academic supervisors are held responsible for the management of contract research costs and any misuse of them as a "research implementation manager". If the student graduates before he/she finishes the research, you are requested for consideration as much as possible so that they can continue the ACT-X research after graduation.

(Applications by Students) Registration of students in e-Rad

Q I am a student. How can I acquire a researcher ID for e-Rad?

- A
1. Confirm that the affiliated institution can conclude Research Contract with JST. (There is another Research Contract prescribed for the case in which a student is the main researcher.)
 2. Have the secretariat of the affiliated institution confirm whether it allows you to acquire a research ID for e-Rad. If not, consider methods acceptable to the organization, including the following:
 - (1) Use the ID of a guiding instructor for application.
 - (2) Acquire a researcher ID as “a researcher not affiliated with any organization”

<https://www.e-rad.go.jp/en/>

Q I am a student. A guiding instructor has approved for me to make a proposal to ACT-X and to sign a confirmation document. However, the university I attend does not approve for a student to possess a researcher ID for e-Rad, whether the student is affiliated with the university or not. Therefore, I am studying how to make a proposal using the ID of the guiding instructor. Are there any precautions concerning the submission of a proposal to e-Rad?

A1 When you use the ID of a guiding instructor for application, input information on yourself instead of information on the guiding instructor in [individual item] tab (JST makes various contacts with the proposer on the basis of the information). => See the figure below.

The screenshot shows the '個別項目' (Individual Item) tab selected in the application form. The '所属区分' (Affiliation) field is highlighted with a red box, and a red callout box points to it. The callout box contains the following text:

When a student uses the ID of a guiding instructor for application, please input information of the student applicant (not the guiding instructor) in the “Entries specific to the program” tab.

A2 Definition of efforts in case of students is different from a usual definition (ratio of involvement time to the total work time per year). The former means the “ratio of time spent on ACT-X research to weekly 40 hours.” Follow this definition for input in the proposal. However, input of an intact efforts value of the proposal in e-Rad imposes pressure on the ratio of guiding instructor’s efforts on e-Rad possibly influencing on managing instructors’ efforts by the university. Properly make adjustment in such a case, such as inputting the smallest possible value (1%) in e-Rad. => See the figure below.

The screenshot shows the 'Research Cost, Research Organization' tab in the e-Rad system. The 'Research Cost' section includes fields for 'Direct Cost' (500,000千円) and 'Indirect Cost' (設定なし). The 'Research Organization' section includes a table for research members with columns for 'Researcher Name', 'Research Organization', 'Specialty', 'Direct Cost', and 'Effort (%)'. The 'Effort (%)' field is highlighted with a red box.

[Research Cost, Research Organization] tab

**When a student uses the ID of a guiding instructor for application, use 1%, for convenience, as efforts ratio to minimize the influence on guiding instructor’s actual efforts.
(Input the student’s actual efforts in the text of a proposal document.)**

(Applications by Students) Intellectual property right related to inventions by students

Q I am in charge of contracts for a research organization. A student of this university is considering a proposal to ACT-X. The university has a stipulation in place that the intellectual property right related to invention by a student belongs to the student him/herself, which makes it impossible for the right to belong to the university.

On the other hand, the Research Contract (Appendix 8-2) of JST states that “a contract research organization takes measures for the intellectual property right related to contract research achievement to belong to the contract research organization.” The provision does not agree with the stipulation by the university. Is the student of this university not allowed to make a proposal to ACT-X in such a situation?

A ACT-X believes that an intellectual property right for invention by a student researcher not employed by a university belongs to the university in principle. However, it is possible for the intellectual property right to belong to the student in case the university has such a rule that an intellectual property right related to research achievement in ACT-X must belong to the student. It is possible also for the student to apply a proposal to ACT-X. In that case, however, the student needs to submit a “confirmation document” of agreement to (1) and (2) below in addition to provisions of agreement in an ordinary “confirmation document.” A confirmation document for such a case (a special form) is prepared separately. Contact rp-info@jst.go.jp to ask for the special form.

(1) A student has the same obligations as those of OTSU (B) in articles 2-7 of “intellectual property provisions” of Research Contract, separate prescription 4, when an intellectual property right related to invention obtained as research achievement in ACT-X belongs to the student.

(2) Considering universities’ recent view to inventions by students during their employment on a contract job, such as “About how to handle inventions at universities (Study Committee for Risk Management in Collaboration between Industry and University of Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology),” there may be cases in the future in which an intellectual property right related to contract research achievement belongs to the affiliated institution. The affiliated institution who decided that the intellectual property right will belong to the organization, should follow the duties stipulated in “intellectual property provisions,” Research Contract, separate prescription 4.

Life Events During the Research Period

Q Is it possible to suspend and later resume ACT-X research in response to life events (childbirth, child care, and care giving)?

A If a ACT-X PI experiences of a life event during the research period, in principle, it is possible to suspend research work for the same period of time as the leave period at his/her institution and later resume work. In this case, JST will allocate the same amount of research budget which this PI have not yet used because of his/her suspension of research activity due to the life event. For details, please refer to the following website.

<https://www.jst.go.jp/kisoken/crest/nadeshiko/index.html>