

June 2025

Sakura Science Program Headquarters, JST

India-Japan Circulation of Talented Youths in Science Programme

FY2025 (Overview)

1. The Basic Framework of the Program

1.1 Purpose

India has rapidly growing research capabilities, many high quality scientific papers, and a lot of excellent young human resources in science and engineering fields including IT fields in recent years. The need to strengthen cooperation in such fields with India is rapidly increasing. Although the competition for Indian human resource in science and engineering field is intense around the world, the exchange and cooperation of human resources between Japan and India is far from sufficient, and in addition, there is a need to ensure diversity in research fields of Japan. Considering this situation, to strengthen exchanges with India, it is necessary to comprehensively strengthen multilayered efforts such as the foundation for exchanges, exchanges at the university student level, inviting top talent of doctoral programs in graduate schools and postdoctoral researchers, and so on.

The " India-Japan Circulation of Talented Youths in Science Program " (hereinafter referred to as "the Program") aims to maintain and enhance Japan's scientific and technological capabilities by inviting talented young researchers from India to Japan to conduct research activities based on joint research being conducted or planned between Japanese universities and public research institutions and Indian research institutions. Specifically, the Program supports research periods in Japan for graduate students and postdoctoral researchers affiliated with laboratories at Indian universities or similar institutions, who are involved in or planning to engage in joint research with Japanese research institutions. The Program primarily targets the fields specified in "1.3 Target Fields" (P3) and aims to facilitate joint supervision by researchers from both countries. For the fellowship candidates, the Program provides an opportunity to participate in joint Japan-India research projects, with the goal of advancing research activities

such as co-authoring academic papers, obtaining degrees at universities in India, and pursue future career development and long-term settlement in Japan. For Japanese research institutions, the Program aims to promote the global exchange of "knowledge," foster talents for international brain circulation, and strengthen Japan's research and innovation capabilities through joint research with India.

1.2 Country for invitation

India (Indian nationality).

1.3 Eligible Fields

In this program, our goal is to promote international brain circulation to contribute to "building a foundation for sustainable participation and collaboration in the international research community" in the leading-edge fields of science and technology. From that point of view, the following seven fields (1) to (7) are the main areas.

Field (1) AI and Information

Example: AI and information research for the realization of Society 5.0. based on the principles of "human understanding and respect," "diversity" and "sustainability"

Field (2) Biotechnology

Example: Biotechnology research relating to the promotion of a bioeconomy and sustainable agriculture, reduced environmental impact, and so on

Field (3) Energy

Example: Energy research to attain carbon neutrality

Field (4) Materials

Example: Materials research that contributes to carbon neutrality, and a circular economy, and so on

Field (5) Quantum

Example: Research related to quantum computing and quantum technology in general, including quantum materials with innovative functionality, which contributes to the realization of a productivity revolution

Field (6) Semiconductors

Example: Semiconductor research related to promoting the semiconductor industrial sector.

Field (7) Telecommunications

Example: Research on telecommunications technology that contributes to the development of a next-generation infrastructure for a digital society

Other fields recognized as important foundations for international collaboration between Japan and India, as well as fields that are expected to play a key role in maintaining and advancing scientific and technological capabilities through future joint research between the two countries, can also be proposed.

1.4 Requirements for Fellowship candidates

Fellowship candidates must meet the following requirements of affiliation / age at the time of exchange participation.

(1) Affiliation and Age

Persons who are enrolled as a graduate student (master's degree, doctoral degree) or postdoctoral fellow at an Indian university, 40 years old and under.

※It is not required for fellowship candidates to be visiting Japan for the first time. Additionally, overlapping applications with the "Sakura Science Program (Courses A/B/C/D)," for which recruitment is conducted separately, are allowed. However, applications where the invitation periods for the same fellowship candidate overlap between the Sakura Science Program and this program will not be accepted.

※The program will allow for consecutive applications, following applications previous year. In such cases, it will be possible to invite the previous year's participants again in the next and subsequent years' applications.

※Persons in active-duty military or military service status at the time of travel and the period of invitation are not eligible.

※To enable fellowship candidates to continue their careers during life events (childbirth, childcare, and nursing care), fellowship candidates' age must be within the above age criteria excluding periods of maternity leave, childcare leave, and nursing care leave (ex. for a person taking one year of childcare leave, the age criteria will be 41 years old).

(2) Research Activities and Stay Period in Japan

Fellowship candidates must be able to conduct research activities at Japanese universities or public research institutions while in Japan. The duration of stay will be up to 12 months from the start date of the first invitation after the implementation agreement (implementation contract) is concluded. In principle, the start date of the invitation will be within this fiscal year.

※The maximum period of stay for this project will be until the end of the following fiscal year. Multiple invitations are allowed within the permitted period, but the total period of stay must not exceed 12 months in total. Even in such cases, the duration of each invitation should be planned so as not to hinder research activities in Japan, and, in principle, each stay should be at least 90 days (minor adjustments of a few days are acceptable due to visa and flight arrangements).

※Fellowship candidates who are already residing in Japan are also eligible.

※Periods during which fellowship candidates are not physically in Japan (e.g., online participation) are not eligible for financial support.

※Fellowship candidates may not receive other fellowship support related to living expenses during their stay. If an fellowship candidate is simultaneously accepted for another fellowship, they must choose one and complete the necessary procedures, such as declining the other offer.

(3) Expenses Covered by JST

JST Support (direct expenses) is expenses directly necessary for the execution of the implementation plan (accommodation, etc.) and general administrative expenses related to fellowship candidates' stay in Japan to

participate in this program. Travel and research expenses are not included in JST support.

In addition to 200,000 yen per month for living expenses per fellowship candidate, the cost for overseas travel insurance necessary for the stay will be supported on a monthly basis.

If it is necessary for the successful execution of research activities, Indian Principal Investigator may also be invited to Japan. In such cases, their stay can be supported for a maximum duration of one month, with funding of up to 413,000 yen per month (standard amount) for living expenses. In addition, the amount equivalent to the consumption tax to be paid by the institution, as well as the indirect costs (general administrative expenses), will be supported by the JST funding to the implementing institution, as necessary.

1.5 Eligibility Requirements for Applicants and Implementing Institutions

(1) Eligibility Requirements for Applicants (Principal Investigator (PI) in Japan)

a. Applicants must themselves belong to a research institution in Japan and be in a position to conduct research at that institution.

※There are no nationality restrictions for applicants.

※Applicants are not required to have already conducted joint research with the Indian research institution at the time of application.

b. Applicants must be researchers who can assume responsibility as the Principal Investigator in charge of the joint research between Japan and India throughout the implementation period, including overseeing the fellowship candidates.

(2) Eligibility Requirements for Implementing Institutions

Institutions must be universities, research and development agencies, or other entities that have research and development bases within Japan and possess corporate status under Japanese law. These Japanese institutions must be conducting or planning to conduct joint research with Indian research institutions.

※Applications will be accepted only from Japanese institutions.

※Applications will not be accepted from individuals without an institutional affiliation or from Indian research institutions or other entities.

1.6 Proposals not covered

- (1) Those not relevant to science and technology (language training, etc.).
- (2) Those with the purpose of profit.

1.7 Number of adoptions

The total number of fellowship candidates will be about 270.

2. Schedule

	Start of the Call for proposals	Submission Deadline	Notification of Decision	Implementation period
FY2025	June 5	August 29	Late November	From the contract signing date on or after January 2026 to the end of FY 2026

3. Selection criteria (Abstract)

Selection will be conducted comprehensively based on the following perspectives:

(1) Content of Japan-India Joint Research

- Does the proposed research activity exhibit originality within the relevant research fields and domains?
- Does the Japanese PI possess sufficient supervisory skills, experience, research environment, and resources (financial, human, and material) to jointly supervise the fellowship candidate?
- Are the academic background, work experience, and achievements of the PI in Japan and the PI in India adequate for successfully conducting the proposed joint research?

(2) Invitation of Outstanding Students and Researchers

- Is the fellowship candidate's research plan in Japan specific and appropriate?
- Does the fellowship candidate's academic background, work experience, and achievements demonstrate sufficient qualifications for conducting research activities?
- Does the fellowship candidate exhibit adaptability and enthusiasm for conducting research in Japan?

(3) Research Support by the Implementing Institution

- Are there adequate technical support measures provided by the implementing institution, such as granting the fellowship candidate an appropriate status and ensuring access to institutional facilities?
- Is the support system provided by the implementing institution, such as health management, sufficient to ensure appropriate research activities?
- Is the career support provided by the institution for the fellowship candidates, such as support for internships, language assistance, and communication support, sufficient to promote career development in Japan and long-term settlement in Japan?

(4) Other Considerations

- Does the proposal appropriately address compliance with export control regulations related to security?

4. Support for Internships at Private Companies

This program aims not only to strengthen Japan's research and innovation capabilities, but also to encourage the invited researchers to settle in Japan in the future. Accordingly, to support the career development of fellowship candidates in Japan, the implementation of internships at private companies—such as research internships related to their research plans—is recommended.

*Please note that after the application deadline, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) plans to provide information on internship opportunities at private companies and conduct a survey to gather participants' preferences regarding internships.

*If the invited researchers undertake paid research internships, etc., without changing their Certificate of Eligibility (COE), they must independently apply for blanket permission for engaging in activities outside their COE. Support from the host institutions may be expected as necessary for such procedures. Depending on the individual circumstances of the fellowship candidate, a change of their COE may also be required, in which case careful consultation with the host institution is strongly encouraged.

* Whether or not the internship at a private company can be implemented depends on matching with the conditions of the accepting company. Therefore, internship implementation will not be considered in the evaluation process.

5. Follow-up Survey

The implementing institution will be required to conduct a follow-up survey approximately once per year after the completion of the implementation plan to assess the effects of the plan. During the five years following the completion of the implementation plan, the institution must track the subsequent career paths of fellowship candidates, as well as the status of ongoing exchanges, including joint research with the fellowship candidates and the India PI. The institution will need to provide responses to JST during follow-up surveys conducted by JST.

6. Related procedures

6.1 Safety Management Responsibilities

(1) Safety management for the fellowship candidate traveling to Japan
Japanese organizations must take thorough safety measures for fellowship candidates. To prepare for potential injuries, please ensure that fellowship candidates are thoroughly covered by overseas travel insurance, including emergency medical evacuation services. In addition, please pay close attention to safety management, such as providing support for vaccinations and establishing an emergency contact system.

(2) Procedures for Travel and Stay

The implementing institution must take full responsibility (including safety obligations) for confirming whether a visa is required for overseas travel and stay, the type of visa needed, and the procedures associated with these

requirements. Additionally, the institution must verify the conditions applicable to fellowship candidates and carry out all necessary arrangements and procedures.

For stays in Japan exceeding three months, various administrative procedures will be required, such as obtaining a residence card, enrolling in the national health insurance system, and registering for the national pension system. Please refer to the guidebook below for appropriate guidance on these matters:

- Immigration Services Agency: Living and Working Guidebook
https://www.moj.go.jp/isa/support/portal/guidebook_all.html

6.2 Joining the alumni organization

Fellowship candidates in this program will be certified as members of the alumni organization at the end of this program (member ID will be issued).

Please note that the English version of the application guidelines contains only a summary. For complete details, please refer to the Japanese version.