

Sakura Invitation Program (Open Application)

Application Guidelines for FY2024 (Overview)

Application should be made by the Japanese host organization.

1. Basic framework of the program

1.1 Purpose

Countries share the future challenge of promoting research and development and transforming results into innovations. In 2014, the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) started the “Sakura Science Program.” Since then, the program has invited talented young human resources for short-term visits to Japan, giving them the opportunity to experience Japan’s cutting-edge science and technology as well as its culture. The Sakura Science Program’s objectives include:

- To support the development of talented human resources from overseas who have the potential to contribute to innovation in science and technology.
- To Accelerate the international brain cycle.
- To promote continuous collaboration, cooperation and interaction between Japanese educational and research institutes and overseas ones.
- To strengthen good relationship between Japan and other countries and regions that will help science and technology diplomacy.

1.2 Countries or regions for invitation

Generally, all countries and regions are eligible for invitation.

1.3 Fields of exchange

Science and technology (natural sciences, humanities and social sciences)

1.4 Requirements for main invitees

The main invitees must meet the following requirements.

(1) Affiliation / Age

- i. High school students, technical college students
- ii. University students, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, faculty members, and persons who are engaged in work related to science and technology at public institutions
- iii. Those who are 40 years old or under.

* Those who were enrolled in an eligible organization at the time of application but graduated or left their position by the time of the exchange program will no longer be accepted as participants. Exceptions include the case that the candidate’s enrollment to graduate school has been confirmed by the sending organization.

* In principle, those who are working in private companies are not eligible for invitation for this program. However, those who are deemed essential for public business promotion can be approved as invitees.

(2) Experience of staying Japan

Among those who were mentioned in the above "(1) Affiliation / Age"

- For high school and technical college students, invitation through the Sakura Invitation Program must be their first stay in Japan. Those who have visited Japan only for short-term sightseeing (up to 10 days) or stayed only in their childhood (up to 12 years old) are still eligible.
- For university students or others, invitation through the Sakura Invitation Program must be their first stay Japan after entering university. Those who have visited Japan only for short-term sightseeing (up to 10 days) are still eligible.

1.5 Requirements for supervisor

The supervisor should be a person who can lead the main invitees and play the role of promoting the entire exchange plan safely and smoothly. It is preferable that the supervisor be 40 years old or under and be visiting Japan for the first time.

1.6 Requirements for Japanese host organization

Universities, technical colleges, high schools, national research and development corporations, independent administrative agencies, private enterprises, local public entities, organizations having corporate status such as public corporation or general corporation in Japan.

*In the case of private enterprises, only the airfare can be covered by JST.

1.7 Requirements for invitation period

The start date of the exchange plan should be after the day in "3. recruitment period" shown below. The end date should be before March 14, 2025.

1.8 Exchange plans not covered

- ① Those not relevant to science and technology, e.g., exchange plans aiming merely at holding events.
- ② Those whose main purpose is participation in events sponsored by other organizations.
- ③ Those with the purpose of profit.
- ④ Those training employees of the host organization or its subsidiaries.

1.9 Other important requirements (advance notification)

When inviting from China, it is necessary for the Chinese sending organization to file a notification with the China Science and Technology Center, China-Japan Technical Cooperation Center, before applying to JST.

- Information on notification will be announced on the website below as soon as the procedure and deadlines are fixed.

<https://ssp.jst.go.jp/form/index.html>

- Precaution statement

- Applications without this notification will not be accepted.

- This notification must be submitted even if the exchange plan includes the invitees of countries and regions other than China.
- Notification is not necessary for invitations from Hong Kong or Macao.

2. Requirements for exchange plan

The Sakura Invitation Program is a short-term invitation program to motivate continuous mutual exchanges in the future. JST offers three courses with different purposes. Each course must have content that increases interest towards the advanced science and technology of Japan, and enables young people to explore their interest in research activities in Japan.

(1) Science and Technology Experience Course (Course A)

This course promotes exchange activities to experience advanced science and technology and to interact with Japanese researchers and students, which ideally leads to continuous collaborations in the field of science and technology. Exchange plans that focus mainly on experience and learning activities are recommended for this course even if they include minor research or training activities.

(2) Collaborative Research Activity Course (Course B)

This course promotes activities to start international collaborative research and to involve invitees in specific ongoing research. Exchange plans that only visit the laboratories or only provide students with some experimental skills are not eligible.

(3) Science and Technology Training Course (Course C)

This course promotes intensive training to acquire specific skills or abilities to meet needs of sending countries/regions or to solve global issues.

(Reference) Limit of numbers of invitees supported by JST

Course (Upper limit of numbers of days)	Course A (≤7 days in principal)		Course B (≤ 21 days)		Course C (≤ 10 days)	
	Single	Multiple	Single	Multiple	Single	Multiple
Main invitees	~8	~8	~8	~8	~8	~12
Supervisors	~1	~2	~1	~2	~1	~2
Total	~8	~8	~8	~8	~8	~12

* The number of main invitees from one organization must be 8 or less.

* Multiple supervisors cannot participate from one organization.

3. Recruitment period

	Acceptance start	Deadline	Result notification	Invitation period
1	January 25 (Thu)	February 22 (Thu)	Mid April	Late May ~ March 14, 2025
2	February 23 (Fri)	May 16 (Thu)	Mid July	Late August ~ March 14, 2025
3	May 17 (Fri)	September 9 (Mon)	Early November	Mid December ~ March 14, 2025

4. Selection criteria (Abstract)

(1) Purpose and outline

Exchange plans should align with the purpose of each course (A, B or C) and the purpose of program shown in "1.1 Purpose".

(2) Invitees

The organization (institution, faculty, laboratory etc.) of the invitees should have excellent young people matched with the objectives and content of the exchange plan.

(3) Content and its significance

The contents of the exchange should match the purpose and outline of the exchange plan. Opportunities for active experiences and communication are preferred to passive tours.

5. Related procedures

5.1 Visa

The host organization should take responsibility for the visas of invitees, so that they can be obtained before the departure date.

5.2 Joining Sakura Science Club

JST is promoting friendship among invitees and sponsoring the "Sakura Science Club" to generate interest in Japanese science and technology, and encourage exchanges that continue even after the program. In principle, the invitees are registered as members of this club and can receive from JST information about the science and technology of Japan and related educational institutions. JST will occasionally send out questionnaires in order to improve the program, and appreciates the cooperation of invitees.

6. Expenses covered by JST

- Airfare
- Transportation, accommodation and meal fee in Japan
- Admission fee for science museums and cultural facilities
- Expenses to conduct essential events

*In the case the host organization is a private enterprise, only airfare can be covered by JST.

*There is an upper limit for each fee.

*Transportation fee in the country/region of the invitees is not covered.

*JST supplies funds to the Japanese organization, not to invitees.