

**Program for Fostering Innovators to Lead a Better Co-being Society  
through Interdisciplinary Co-creation**

Application Guidelines

At Kumamoto University, we provide support for doctoral students through the "Better Co-being" Doctoral Innovator Development Program, with funding from the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) Support for Pioneering Research Initiated by the Next Generation (SPRING) program. The program aims to improve motivation for doctoral study and to foster doctoral candidates with advanced research capabilities. Starting in AY2024, we have implemented the "Program for Fostering Innovators to Lead a Better Co-being Society through Interdisciplinary Co-creation" (hereinafter "the Program").

Starting from AY2026, SPRING has introduced a new classification system. Under this Program, support will be provided according to the following categories:

**【Category 1】** Primarily Japanese students

※ For details on eligible students under Category 1, please refer to Appendix 2 (p. 7).

**【Category 2】** International students (including government-sponsored international students)

## 1. Number of Students to be Accepted

**【Category 1】** Approximately 8 students

**【Category 2】** Approximately 3 students

\* Limited to doctoral students who enrolled in April 2026.

## 2. Eligibility for Application

Applicants must be enrolled in the Graduate School of Social and Cultural Sciences, Graduate School of Science and Technology, Graduate School of Medical Sciences, Graduate School of Health Sciences, or Graduate School of Pharmaceutical Sciences, and must meet all of the following criteria. Applicants who are on a leave of absence at the time of application are not eligible.

### **【Category 1】**

- (1) Doctoral students who enrolled in April 2026
- (2) Japanese students who are not JSPS Special Research Fellows
- (3) Students who are deemed to NOT be receiving a stable income sufficient to cover living expenses (approximately 2.4 million yen/year) from a university, company, or other organization, such as a salary or executive compensation
- (4) Students who have never received a disciplinary action as stipulated in Article 89 of the Kumamoto University Regulations (as applied mutatis mutandis pursuant to Article 55 of the Graduate School Regulations)
- (5) Students who are able to complete the educational programs required by this Program throughout the support period

※ For details on eligible students under Category 1, please refer to Appendix 2 (p. 7).

### **【Category 2】**

- (1) Doctoral students who enrolled in April 2026
- (2) Students with international student residence status who are not affiliated with any organization other than this university
- (3) Students who have never received a disciplinary action as stipulated in Article 89 of the Kumamoto University Regulations (as applied mutatis mutandis pursuant to Article 55 of the Graduate School Regulations)
- (4) Students who are able to complete the educational programs required by this Program throughout the support period

### 3. Support Amount

#### 【Category 1】

Living expenses: 200,000 JPY/month

Research grant: 200,000 JPY/year

#### 【Category 2】

Research grant: 200,000 JPY/year

\* The living expenses and research grant amounts are subject to change depending on government policies and budget conditions.

\* Living expenses and the research grant will be provided/allocated for the period of enrollment in the doctoral program (within the standard period of study).

\* For category 1 students accepted into the program, the first payment of living expenses will be made in June as a lump sum covering April through June. Payments will be made monthly thereafter.

\* In accordance with university regulations, the research grant may be used for items necessary for research, travel expenses, etc. The research grant will be allocated to and managed by the affiliated laboratory.

\* If the payment of living expenses begins or ends in the middle of a month, the amount for that month will be determined by the university.

\* The amount equivalent to living expenses is treated as miscellaneous income under tax law and is subject to income tax and residential tax.

- For questions regarding dependents under health insurance and dependent allowances, please contact the person in charge at the workplace of the head of household (e.g., parents).
- For questions regarding dependents under income tax, please contact your local tax office.

\* If you are an international student who has not yet arrived in Japan, the start of support (allocation of research expenses) will be after your arrival in Japan.

### 4. Program Terms

Students who are accepted into the program must comply with the following terms. Failure to do so may result in the suspension of living expense payments and/or research grant allocation.

- (1) Students should focus on their research activities.
- (2) Students should complete the research ethics and compliance training provided by the university.
- (3) Students should have their enrollment confirmed every month.
- (4) Students should submit a research plan and research report to the Program Supervisor each academic year.
- (5) Throughout the support period, students must complete the following educational programs as defined by this Program:
  - a. Participate in at least one overseas training program during the period of support, OR obtain credits for one of the following listed in Appendix (p. 6): "Doctoral Cooperative Education through Research Internships" or "HIGO Internship II".
  - b. Attend all colloquia and reporting sessions.
  - c. Complete the courses required by this Program (see Appendix, p. 6) in accordance with the course completion procedures.
- (6) Register with the Cooperative Education through Research Internships Consortium System.

### 5. Application Procedures

#### (1) Application Method

- Please access the website below, complete the required information in the application form, and submit.

Website link: <https://higoprogram.jp/bettercobeing/>

- Please download the required forms from the website, compile all submission documents into a single PDF file, and upload it to the File Submission Box.

When uploading the PDF file, please name the file using your graduate school abbreviation and full name (e.g., "D: Taro Kumadai").

\* Use a capital letter (half-width) for the abbreviation.

Affiliation Sign	Graduate School
G	Graduate School of Social and Cultural Sciences
D	Graduate School of Science and Technology
R	Graduate School of Medical Sciences
Y	Graduate School of Pharmaceutical Sciences
W	Graduate School of Health Sciences

## (2) Submission Documents

- Program Application Form (to be filled out directly in the application form)
- Statement of Purpose and Research Plan (to be uploaded as PDF)
- Document Confirmation Form (Checklist)
- English Proficiency Test Score (if available, attach after the Document Confirmation Form (Checklist); If not available, no attachment is necessary.)

## (3) Application Period

Friday, May 1, 2026 – Friday, May 15, 2026

## 6. Selection Procedure and Notification of Results

(1) Selection will be based on submitted application documents (document review) and an interview.

(Points considered in the document review)

- Reasons for application (clarity of motivation, vision for career path, motivation for research, aptitude and ambition for interdisciplinary learning and cross-disciplinary research, and career path realization, etc.)
- Research plan (research contributions, clarity of objectives, specificity and feasibility of the plan, clarity of the application, social significance of the research, potential for interdisciplinary integration and creation of new academic fields, etc.)
- English language score from an external examination

(Points considered in the interview)

- Motivation, reasons for application, research plan, career vision, etc.

※ For international students, the interview will also confirm their intention to seek employment at a university, research institution, or company within Japan, and their willingness to contribute to the advancement of innovation in Japan.

(2) The language used for the document review and interview shall be Japanese or English.

(3) Interviews will be conducted via Zoom. The interview dates are scheduled for mid-June (approximately June 9 (Tue) – June 10 (Wed)). Specific dates and times will be communicated via the email address provided in the application.

(4) The results of the selection process will be announced by the end of June.

## **7. Handling of Personal Information**

- (1) Personal information contained in the application documents will be used for the selection of program students and for other purposes related to the program.
- (2) Personal information such as test results used in the selection of program students will be used for the compilation and analysis of selection results and for the investigation and study of selection methods.
- (3) In carrying out the tasks described in (1) and (2) above, some work may be outsourced to an external provider. In such cases, after entering into an appropriate contract to ensure proper handling of personal information, all or part of the collected personal information may be provided to that provider.

## **8. Information Sessions**

Information will be posted on the program website ([https://higoprogram.jp/en/bettercobeing\\_english](https://higoprogram.jp/en/bettercobeing_english)).

## **9. Important Notes**

- The names of selected students will be posted on the university website.
- After submission, changes to the application are generally not permitted.
- Applications with deficiencies (e.g., exceeding the maximum page limit) will not be reviewed.
- Applications will not be returned.
- Applicants who provide false information will lose their eligibility and may be disqualified even after selection.
- A follow-up survey will be conducted. Students will be asked to participate in surveys for approximately 10 years after the end of support through this Program.
- After being selected for the program, students must submit a certificate of completion of the research ethics education (eAPRIN or eL CoRE) provided by the university. You will receive guidance from your graduate school, so please complete the training promptly.
- Concurrent application with the Guide4AI Program is not permitted.

## **10. Contact Information**

Institute for Education and Student Affairs,  
Graduate Program Education Promotion Division  
Email: [daigakuin-kyoiku@jimu.kumamoto-u.ac.jp](mailto:daigakuin-kyoiku@jimu.kumamoto-u.ac.jp)  
※ Please direct all inquiries by email.

## Appendix 1

### Program Courses and Credits

Subject Group	Program Courses	Credits
Cross-Discipline / Challenging Researcher Development Package Courses	Forefront of Research and Integration of Knowledge ※1	1
	Understanding Contemporary Society B ※2	1
	Current Science and Technology in Japan II (日本の 先端科学 II) ※2	2
	Understanding Contemporary Society A ※2	1
	Basic Science for Technological Innovation ※2	1
	History of Sciences ※2	1
	S-HIGO Cutting Edge Seminar B ※3	2
	In-Depth Cross-Cultural Understanding Program I ※4	2
	In-Depth Cross-Cultural Understanding Program II ※4	2
	Career Development / Competency Development Package Courses	Doctoral Cooperative Education through Research Internships ※1
HIGO Leadership Training Course ※1		1
HIGO Internship II ※1		1
HIGO Business and Governmental Seminar II ※1		1
Technical English I ※2		1
Technical English II ※2		1
Introduction to Management ※2		1

#### Notes

- (1) Courses marked with ※1 are Graduate School Liberal Arts Program courses.
- (2) Courses marked with ※2 are Graduate School of Science and Technology courses.
- (3) Courses marked with ※3 are Graduate School of Medical Sciences and Graduate School of Pharmaceutical Sciences courses (S-HIGO Professional Program courses).
- (4) Courses marked with ※4 are Graduate School of Social and Cultural Sciences courses.
- (5) Whether credits earned through the Better Co-being Program or Well-Being Program will be recognized toward the graduation requirements of the enrolled course will be determined by the respective graduate school.

## Appendix 2 【Category 1】 Students Eligible for Research Incentive Funding (Living Expense Equivalent) as Japanese Students

A machine translated version of this table is shown on the next page but as there may be mistakes, please refer to the Japanese version to confirm

Category	Applicable Examples	Period of Stay	Eligibility (○/x)
① Persons with Japanese Nationality	Japanese citizens, foreign nationals naturalized in Japan	—	○
② Special Permanent Residents	Persons residing in Japan as statutory special permanent residents under the provisions of Article 3 of the Special Act on Immigration Control	Indefinite	○
(Article 3 of the Special Act on the Immigration Control of, Inter Alia, Those Who Have Lost Japanese Nationality Pursuant to the Treaty of Peace with Japan)			
③ Permanent Residents, Spouses or Children of Japanese Nationals, Spouses or Children of Permanent Residents	<b>Permanent Residents:</b> Persons who have obtained permission for permanent residence from the Minister of Justice.	<b>Permanent Residents:</b> Indefinite	○
(Appended Table 2 of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act)	<b>Spouses or Children of Japanese Nationals:</b> Spouses, children, or special adopted children of Japanese nationals.	<b>Spouses/Children (Japanese):</b> 5 years, 3 years, 1 year, or 6 months	○
	<b>Spouses or Children of Permanent Residents:</b> Spouses of Permanent Residents / Special Permanent Residents, and children born in Japan who continue to reside in Japan.	<b>Spouses/Children (Permanent):</b> 5 years, 3 years, 1 year, or 6 months	○
④ Long-Term Residents	Certain Indochinese refugees, certain Vietnamese refugees, third-generation Japanese descendants, spouses of Long-Term Residents, biological children of naturalized Japanese citizens / Permanent Residents / Special Permanent Residents / Long-Term Residents, Japanese orphans left in China and their children, foreign parents supporting biological children of Japanese nationals, etc.	5 years, 3 years, 1 year, or 6 months, or a period specifically designated by the	x
(Appended Table 2 of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act)			
(Continued)	Of the above, those recognized as having the intention to permanently reside in the future.	(As above)	○
⑤ Dependent	Children, etc., supported by a person residing with the status of residence of Professor, Artist, Religious Activities, Journalist, Highly Skilled Professional, Business Manager, Legal/Accounting Services, Medical Services, Researcher, Instructor, Engineer/Specialist in Humanities/International Services, Intra-company Transferee, Nursing Care, Entertainer, Skilled Labor, Specified Skilled Worker (ii), Cultural Activities, or	A period specifically designated by the Minister of Justice (within 5 years)	x
(Appended Table 1 of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act)			
(Continued)	1. Of the above, those who meet all of the following conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persons born in Japan, or who entered Japan for the first time by the end of the school year in which they reached 12 years of age.</li> <li>• Persons who graduated from / completed Japanese elementary schools through high schools, etc.</li> <li>• Persons recognized as having the intention to work and settle in Japan after graduating from / completing university, etc.</li> </ul>	(As above)	○
(Continued)	2. Persons recognized as being equivalent to those listed in 1. based on a comprehensive consideration of their period of stay in Japan and other circumstances.	(As above)	○
⑥ Persons residing under the statuses of residence listed on the right	(1) Diplomat, Official, Professor, Artist, Religious Activities, Journalist	A period ranging from 15 days to 5 years depending on the classification (some Highly Skilled Professionals have an indefinite period)	x
	(2) Highly Skilled Professional, Business Manager, Legal/Accounting Services, Medical Services, Researcher, Instructor, Engineer/Specialist in Humanities/International Services, Nursing Care, Intra-company Transferee, Entertainer, Skilled Labor, Technical Intern Training		
(Appended Table 1, 1 to 5 of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act)	(3) Cultural Activities, Temporary Visitor		
	(4) Student, Trainee		
	(5) Designated Activities		