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## **APPLICATION GUIDELINES FOR MASTER'S TRACK AY2026-27**

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### **MASTER'S TRACK**

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The Japan-IMF Scholarship Program for Asia (JISPA) offers scholarships to junior government officials from emerging and developing economies in the Asia-Pacific region to pursue graduate studies in economics and public policy in Japan. The Master's Track<sup>1</sup> provides opportunities to study at one of the four partner universities:

- National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS)
- Hitotsubashi University (HIT)
- International University of Japan (IUJ)
- The University of Tokyo (UTokyo)

### **APPLICATION DEADLINES**

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**APPLICATION DEADLINE: OCTOBER 20, 2025, 23:59, JST (Japan Standard Time)**

Online Application Window: September 20 – October 20, 2025

**Reference Letter Submission Deadline: November 1, 2025, 23:59, JST**

(Reference letters can only be provided after the submission of the online application)

### **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

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Applicants must meet **all** of the following criteria:

**1. National of one of the following countries:**

Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao P.D.R., Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Pacific Island Countries, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Vietnam.

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<sup>1</sup> Starting from AY2026-27, the "Partnership Track" under the Japan-IMF Scholarship Program for Asia (JISPA) has renamed to "Master's Track".

## **2. Officials currently employed and nominated by one of the following or related government agencies**

- a) central bank, ministry of economy, ministry of finance, ministry of planning/development, ministry of trade/commerce, tax administration, national statistics bureau, financial regulatory agencies, or similar government bodies.
- b) other government areas that significantly influence macroeconomic policy formulation or implementation may also be considered.

A strong nomination from the applicant's government agency is required. This must be submitted as part of the application through a signed nomination and certification form, confirming the agency's support for the applicant's participation in the program and assurance of reinstatement upon completion.

**NOTE:** Officials who are (will be) on leave or out of duty for a cumulative total of more than three months, within the 12-month period leading up to July 1, 2026, are not eligible to apply (due to the long-term study leave requirement of JISPA).

## **3. Hold a Bachelor's degree with a minimum of 16 years of formal education.**

Applicants must have a bachelor's degree or equivalent, with at least 16 years of formal education. Names of schools and dates of attendance for the most recent three schools must be listed in the application. In some cases, 15 years of formal education may be accepted if there is an official explanation (a country's educational system or other exceptional circumstances).

## **4. English Proficiency**

Applicants must demonstrate have English language proficiency, equivalent to official iBT score of 79-80 or higher, or an overall IELTS score of at least 6.0.

## **5. Commitment to National Development**

Applicants must demonstrate a clear commitment to contributing to the development of their home country. If selected, they are required to return to their agency upon completion of their studies to utilize the knowledge and skills gained through the JISPA for their country's development.

## **[Priority Applicants]**

Priority is given to the following applicants:

- Under 36 years old
- Have not obtained a Master's Degree from outside their own country
- Have a minimum of 2 years work experience in the public sector at the time of application.

## APPLICATION PROCEDURES

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JISPA accepts application materials exclusively through its online application system. The application link will be made available on the official JISPA website at <https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/ResRep/OAP-Home/JISPA-Home>

### I. JISPA Online Application System

Applicants are required to provide their application information and upload the following documents:

- 1) **Application Information:** Please refer to the Sample Application Form for the required information. Fill out all required fields accurately and completely.
- 2) **Nomination and Certification Form from the Employing Agency:** This form must be signed by the authorized official responsible for nominating and endorsing applicants for overseas study and must bear the agency's official seal. This confirms the agency's support of the candidate and guarantees the candidate's position will be maintained upon completion of their studies in Japan.
- 3) **Research Proposal for Thesis or Policy Paper:** The proposal should clearly describe the project you wish to undertake, grounded in important policy issues and challenges facing your country. It should demonstrate how your research will contribute to macroeconomic stability, economic growth, and/or overall development. Plagiarism will lead to disqualification from the JISPA selection process. The proposal must be typewritten and no more than 500 words. Note that you cannot substitute your proposal by listing courses you intend to take. (A4 or Letter size, it must be a Word file with the macros disabled, and the file size should not exceed 1MB)
- 4) **Statement of Purpose:** This statement should explain your purpose for applying to the JISPA, including your short-term and long-term career goals. Please describe why you have chosen your preferred partner universities, and the area of study you wish to pursue. Explain how your qualifications and experience align with the requirements of the partner universities you are applying for and describe how studying under JISPA and its partner universities will contribute to your professional growth and career development. (400-600 words; text only, no equations or formulas. A4 or Letter size, Word file only. The file size should not exceed 1MB)
- 5) **Official Transcripts and Certified Copies of Diplomas/Degree Certificates:** Please include official transcripts and official copies of diplomas or degree certificates from all undergraduate and graduate schools. An official copy means a certified copy of the original document with an official seal obtained from the administration office of the

university attended. Copies attested by organizations/persons not having notarized/legal bearing will not be accepted.

- 6) **Grading System and GPA Explanation:** Include the page from the transcript or a separate document that explains the grading system and GPA. If not provided, applicants must prepare an explanation and calculate their GPA using a [GPA calculator](#), uploading the completed calculator.

7) **TOEFL/IELTS certificate** (if available)

- Test reports must be from an examination taken after December 1, 2023.
- The JISPA institution code as listed below can be registered when applicants take the test.<sup>2</sup>

TOEFL: "C626 – Japan-IMF Scholarship Program for Asia"

IELTS: "JISPA: Japan-IMF Scholarship Program for Asia"

- If a score is unavailable, applicant will be requested to take the in-house English examination administered by the JISPA Secretariat or provide TOEFL-iBT/IELTS scores prior to receiving a final decision on the scholarship award.

**English Test Requirement Exemption Policy:** The applicants who meet one of the following criteria are exempt from submitting the English test report.

- i. Countries where the official language is English: India, the Philippines, and selected PIC countries
- ii. Education: English medium programs (undergraduate and/or graduate-level) in selected English-speaking countries (Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the UK, and the US)

- 8) **Photo:** Please submit a recent, formal photograph that clearly shows your full face, similar to a passport-style photo.

- Accepted file format: JPG
- Maximum file size: 500 KB

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<sup>2</sup> An English test allowance is provided to scholars who: 1) registered the JISPA institution code in TOEFL or IELTS at the time of application and 2) admitted to and enrolled in the partner universities, in lieu of receipt.

## II. JISPA Reference Letter Form

Reference letters must be provided directly by referees through the “JISPA Reference Letter Form.” The link to this form will be sent directly to the referees upon completion of the applicant’s online application.

- 1) Two Letters of Reference are required.
- 2) Referees should be the applicant’s workplace supervisors, academic advisors, or another professional reference familiar with the applicant’s qualifications and character.
- 3) Request two referees to prepare reference letters on your behalf well ahead of the online application deadline. In contacting Referees, please:
  - Confirm their email addresses from official institution domains. This information is required for the online application system.
  - Provide the referees with the applicant's primary email address for the JISPA online application system to ensure they correctly identify the applicant in the “JISPA Reference Letter Form.”
  - Clearly inform the referees that the content of their reference letters will remain confidential and will not be shared with the applicant.
- 4) The reference letter should be signed by the referee, including their name and title.  
Reference letters must be submitted by **November 1, 2025, 23:59 JST**.

## III. Passport Copy

Applicants must also send a copy of their passport to the JISPA secretariat via email. Upon submission of the Online Application, you will receive a PDF version of your application form via email within a few hours, containing a unique Reference Number.

Please submit the scanned copy of your valid national passport via email to [JISPA@imf.org](mailto:JISPA@imf.org) with the following information by **October 21, 23:59 JST**:

If you do not have your passport available, please submit a photocopy of your official national ID card that includes a photo.

**Subject:** AY2026-27 JISPA Application Passport Copy

**Email Body:**

1. Reference Number:
2. Salutation:
3. Full Name:
4. Country:
5. Agency:
6. Primary Email Address:

**The file name should be titled as:**

Reference Number\_Full Name\_Passport  
(e.g., JAN12345\_Taro Tanaka\_Passport)

### **[Important Notices]**

1. All submitted application materials must be presented in English or be accompanied by an official English translation.
2. Submitted materials will be considered under the control of the IMF and provided to the Partner Universities and the Government of Japan as deemed appropriate. None of the materials will be returned to applicants.
3. Incomplete applications, including missing two reference letters or passport copy, will not be processed.
4. If selected, applicants must submit original copies of their application materials requested by the university of enrollment for their admission process. Failure to do so will result in the revocation of the university's admission and cancellation of the scholarship offer.

## Online Application Flow and Instructions

### 1. Prepare Application Information and Required

- i. Review the JISPA e-brochure to ensure that you meet all the eligibility requirements.
- ii. Collect all necessary information and documents as specified in the sample application form, ready for a single submission session.
- iii. Note: Uploaded documents, such as research proposals and statements of purpose, must not contain macro functions.

### 2. Contact Two Referees

- i. Request two referees to prepare reference letters on your behalf.
- ii. Ensure referees' email addresses are from their official institution domains. A non-official domain (like Gmail, Yahoo) will not be accepted.
- iii. Provide your referees with your primary email address for the JISPA online application system. This ensures they correctly identify you in the "JISPA Reference Letter Form."
- iv. Clearly inform your referees that the content of their reference letters will remain confidential and will not be shared with you, the applicant.

### 3. Complete and submit the JISPA Online Application

- i. Enter your information following the provided instructions and typing tips, ensuring accuracy to avoid the need for re-submission. Remember, uploaded documents should not contain macro functions.
- ii. Carefully review your application before submitting. No changes can be made post-submission. If an error occurs, you must resubmit using a new email address and inform your referees to do the same. Notify OAP at [jispa@imf.org](mailto:jispa@imf.org) with the new reference number and primary email address.
- iii. Click the "Submit Responses" button. You'll receive an auto-completion message at your primary email address.

### 4. Receive PDF Application Form

- i. **Upon submission, you will receive a PDF version of your application form via email within a few hours of the submission.** This form reflects the information you entered and contains a unique Reference Number (this file does not contain the materials uploaded).
- ii. **IMPORTANT: Save this PDF application form with your Reference Number. It is crucial for future correspondence and inquiries related to your application.**

### 5. Passport Copy Submission

- i. **Send a copy of your passport to the JISPA secretariat via email by October 21**
- ii. Ensure to include the required information such as Reference Number

### 6. Referees Submit Reference Letters

- i. After your application submission, referees will receive a link to submit their reference letters confidentially through "JISPA Reference Letter Form"
- ii. Ensure your referees have submitted their letters before the deadline.
- iii. An auto-completion confirmation email will be sent to both the referee and the applicant post-submission.

## Important Notices

1. **Deadline:** Meet the deadlines. Your application will be processed only after your application and the reference letters are successfully provided by this due date.
  - **Online Application Deadline:** October 20, 23:59, JST
  - **Passport Copy Submission Deadline:** October 21, 23:59, JST (via email)
  - **Reference Letter Submission Deadline:** November 1, 23:59, JST
2. **Confidentiality of Reference Letters:** The contents of the reference letters will remain confidential and will not be disclosed to you.
3. **PDF Application Form and Reference Number:** The PDF form you receive upon submission is vital for future correspondence. Ensure you save it securely.
4. **Auto-completion Messages:** Failure to receive these auto-completion messages indicates that you have entered an invalid or incorrect email addresses. Restart the application or reference letter form with the correct address.

### [TYPING TIPS FOR THE ONLINE APPLICATION SYSTEM]

Please follow **the typing tips** below as well as instructions provided in the online application.

1. Please capitalize the first letter in the field and make all the other letters lower case when typing, e.g.: Last Name: **N**guyen (NG: NGUYEN, nguyen)
2. Please capitalize the first letter in each part of any name, if the name consists of more than one word, e.g.: Department: **D**epartment of **M**acroeconomic **P**olicy (NG: DEPARTMENT OF MACTOECONOMIC POLICY, department of macroeconomic policy)
3. If a field is not relevant to the applicant, please leave it BLANK (do NOT type N/A for this field)- Please be sure to complete all required fields.
4. If you have only a single name, please type this name in the field "Last Name" and then input N/A in the field "First name".
5. For a candidate from Vietnam, please leave the field "Middle Name" blank and enter your given name in the field "Given Name".
6. If you are from a branch office, please type the name of the branch office in the field of "Department". Then, the department of the branch office should be entered in the field of "Division".
7. Follow instructions on data format, such as time (MMYYYY) and phone numbers with a country code (**Do not start with +**), whenever stipulated on the online application form. (NG: +123 456 789)

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### Important Dates for the Master's Track

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See the table below for important dates. Please note that these dates are indicative, and subject to change.

Application Process	Date
Application deadline	October 20, 2025, 23:59 JST
Math test given to all eligible applicants	December, 2025
Interviews with selected applicants	Late January to late February 2026
Notifications to selected and reserved applicants <sup>3</sup>	Mid-March, 2026
Deadline to accept the scholarship	Mid-late March, 2026
Reserve or stand-by applicants are called, if necessary	Mid-late March, 2026
Visa application process	March – June 2026
Arrival in Japan for Orientation Program	Early July, 2026
Orientation Program (OP)	Early-July to mid-September, 2026
Moving to the University from the OP	GRIPS: late-September, 2026 Hitotsubashi: mid-September, 2026 IUJ: mid-September, 2026 UTokyo: mid-September, 2026
Programs begin	GRIPS: October 1, 2026 Hitotsubashi: mid-September, 2026 IUJ: October 1, 2026 UTokyo: late-September, 2026

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- Successful applicants for Hitotsubashi University are requested to submit the additional application form requested by the university, for the sake of formality. HIT will contact their finalists for details once the notification of JISPA application results is made in mid-March.

Once you reviewed and completed the steps above,  
please proceed to the [Online Application](#).