
APPLICATION GUIDELINES FOR MASTER'S TRACK AY2027-28

MASTER'S TRACK

The Japan-IMF Scholarship Program for Asia (JISPA) offers scholarships to young 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 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

APPLICATION DEADLINE: OCTOBER 20, 2026, 23:59, JST (Japan Standard Time)

Online Application Window: September 15 – October 20, 2026

Reference Letter Submission Deadline: November 1, 2026, 23:59, JST

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

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

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.

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 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 more than one consecutive month, within the 12-month period leading up to July 1, 2027, 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

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. Describe how studying under JISPA and its partner universities will contribute to your professional development and enhance your ability to serve your agency and contribute to your country's 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, 2024.

- The JISPA institution code as listed below can be registered when applicants take the test. ¹

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) **Passport Copy:** Please upload a photocopy of the photograph page of your valid national passport. If a passport is unavailable, please attach a photocopy of your official national ID with photo.
- 9) **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

II. JISPA REFERENCE LETTER FORM

Applicants must first complete the online application and obtain a Reference Number. Reference letters must be submitted directly by the referees to the JISPA Secretariat at jispa@imf.org, with the Reference Number.

Two Letters of Reference are required.

- 1) Referees should be the applicant’s workplace supervisors, academic advisors, or another professional reference familiar with the applicant’s qualifications and character.
- 2) Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact their referees well in advance of the application deadline and:
 - Confirm the referees’ email addresses are from official institutional domains, as this information is required in the online application system;

¹ 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.

- Inform the referees that their reference letters will be treated as confidential and will not be shared with the applicant; and

Inform the referees to ensure that each reference letter is signed (handwritten or certified digital signature) includes the referee's name and title.

- 3) Once the online application has been submitted, applicants will receive a PDF copy of their application form containing a unique Reference Number. Applicants should provide this Reference Number to their referees and request that the reference letters be submitted directly to the JISPA Secretariat at jispa@imf.org from their official institutional email address registered in the online application, as follows:

Submission Deadline: November 1, 2026, 23:59 JST

Email Subject:

AY2027-28 JISPA Reference Letter: [Reference Number]

Email Body:

Applicant Information

1. Reference Number:
2. Salutation: Mr. or Ms.
3. Full Name:
4. Country:
5. Agency:
6. Primary Email Address: [Applicant's email address registered as the primary email address on the online application]

File Naming Convention:

ReferenceNumber_ApplicantFullName_RL_RefereeName

Example

Applicant:

Name: Mr. Taro Tanaka
 Reference Number: 2026_JAN_12345
 Primary Email Address: TTanaka@###.gov.jp

Referee:

Prof. Hanako Suzuki

Email Subject:

AY2026-27 JISPA Reference Letter: 2026_JAN_12345

Email Body:

Applicant Information

1. Reference Number: 2026_JAN_12345
2. Salutation: Mr.

3. Full Name: Taro Tanaka
4. Country: Japan
5. Agency: Ministry of Finance
6. Primary Email Address: TTanaka@###.gov.jp

File Name

2026_JAN_12345_Taro Tanaka_RL_Hanako Suzuki

If the referee's signature block does not include the information below, please ask the referee to provide:

Referee information

1. Full Name
 2. Salutation
 3. Country
 4. Agency
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[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, will not be processed.
4. If selected, applicants must submit original copies of their diploma and transcripts via post to OAP. Failure to do so will result in the revocation of the university's admission and cancellation of the scholarship offer.

Important Dates for the Master's Track

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

Schedule	Date
Application deadline	October 20, 2026 (November 1, 2026: Submission Due Date for Reference Letters)
Math test given to all eligible applicants	December 3, 2026
Interviews with selected applicants	Late January to mid-February, 2027
Notifications to selected and reserved candidates ¹	March 11, 2027
Deadline to accept the scholarship	March 18, 2027
Reserve or stand-by applicants are called, if necessary	March 19, 2027
Visa application process	March–June 2027
<u>JISPA Program Commences</u>	<u>July 2027</u>
Arrival in Japan for Orientation Program	July 7-8, 2027
Orientation Program (OP)	July 9 to September 22, 2027
Moving to the University from the OP	GRIPS: September 23, 2027 Hitotsubashi: early-September, 2027 ² IUJ: September 23, 2027 ³ UTokyo: September 23, 2027
Master's Programs begin	GRIPS: October 1, 2027 Hitotsubashi: mid-September, 2027 IUJ: October 1, 2027 UTokyo: late-September, 2027

² HIT-JISPA scholars move to the university earlier following their academic year.

³ IUJ-JISPA scholars will remain at the IUJ.

AY2027-28 Online Application Flow and Instructions

Master's Track | Japan-IMF Scholarship Program for Asia (JISPA)

Before starting: Review the application guidelines and sample application form, confirm that you meet all eligibility requirements, and prepare the required information and documents for a single online submission session. Application materials must be submitted through the JISPA Online Application System only. [JISPA website](#)

I. Online Application Flow

Step	Action	Key instructions
1	Confirm eligibility and prepare materials	- Confirm your eligibility and familiarize yourself with all application requirements, conditions of participation, declarations, and obligations under the program. - Collect all required information and documents as specified in the application guidelines and sample application form, ready for a single submission session. - Ensure Word files for the research proposal and statement of purpose do not contain macro functions.
2	Contact two referees in advance	- Request two referees to prepare reference letters on your behalf. - Confirm that referees use official institutional email addresses; non-official domains (such as Gmail, Yahoo) are not accepted. - Clearly inform your referees that letters are confidential, must be signed (handwritten or certified digital signature), and must include the referee's name and title.
3	Complete and submit the JISPA online application	- Enter all required information accurately and upload all required documents through the online application system. - Carefully review your application before submitting. No changes can be made post-submission. If errors are identified, you must resubmit using a new email address and inform your referees to do the same. Notify OAP at jispa@imf.org with the new reference number and primary email address. - Click the "Submit Responses" button. You will receive an auto-completion message at your primary email address.
4	Save the PDF application form and Reference Number	After submission, you will receive a PDF copy of the application form by email. The PDF contains your unique Reference Number and reflects the information entered in the online form. Please note that uploaded materials are not included. IMPORTANT: Please securely save your PDF Application Form Copy as the Reference Number is required for correspondence and reference letter submission.
5	Provide the Reference Number to referees	Send your Reference Number to both referees and share the reference letter submission instructions specified in the application guidelines. - Ask each referee to submit the signed reference letter directly to the JISPA Secretariat at jispa@imf.org from the official institutional email address registered in the online application.
6	Confirm reference letter submission	- Ensure that both reference letters are submitted directly by the referees by the deadline. - Incomplete applications, including any reference letters, will not be processed.

II. Important notices

1. **Deadline:** Your application will be processed only after your application and reference letters are successfully provided by this due date. Late applications or reference letters will NOT be accepted.
 - **Online Application Deadline:** October 20, 23:59, JST
 - **Reference Letter Submission Deadline:** November 1, 23:59, JST (via email)
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 the PDF securely.
4. **Auto-completion Message:** Failure to receive the auto-completion message 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 applicants 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)