

Hokkaido University DX Doctoral Fellowship FAQ

<Revised history>

Date	Details
2021/10/5	Added Q1-9, Q1-10, Q1-11

1. Overview of this fellowship

Q1-1 Is the support period for students until the completion of the doctoral course?

A1-1 The support period for students enrolled as of September 2021 is the period until the completion of the doctoral degree course, excluding the period of leave of absence before September 2021. For example, if you enroll in a three-year doctoral program course for one year and take a one-year leave of absence, the support period will be two years. The details of the remaining period of standard course duration until completion and the corresponding support period are listed in "3. Eligibility, Application Categories, and Application Period " of the Application Guideline.

In addition, for students who entered in October 2021, the support period is three years in the case of a three-year doctoral degree course and four years in the case of a four-year doctoral degree course. This does not apply if the support is terminated due to evaluation by the project supervisor, etc.

Q1-2 What procedures, methods, and duration (e.g., how many months will be divided into separate payments) will be used to provide research fellowship (amount equivalent to living expenses) and research expenses to students?

A1-2 In principle, the research fellowship of 150,000 yen per month (amount equivalent to living expenses) will be provided in even-numbered months for the two months amount including the following month. However, if the student does not submit a monthly activity report that also serves as confirmation of enrollment in graduate school, the provision will be temporarily withheld. For research expenses, 400,000 yen per year will be provided to all recipients. Other research expenses necessary for challenging

and interdisciplinary research will be provided as appropriate after reviewing the proposals. The specific method and procedure of provision will be announced separately to recipients.

Q1-3 Does the recipient need to be excluded from the support of the support obligor (parent, etc.)?

A1-3 Of the amount paid, the research expenses (amount equivalent to living expenses) are taxable as miscellaneous income under the tax law, so please inform your support obligor (parent, etc.) and inquire with staff at the obligor's workplace regarding the handling of dependents in health insurance, alimony, etc. About the handling of dependents in income tax, please contact your local tax office. Please also refer to "9. Amount of research fellowship and research expenses (2021 Academic Year) [Cautions] " in the Application Guidelines.

Q1-4 Will there be an employment relationship between the recipients and the university?

A1-4 This fellowship is not based on an employment relationship between the recipients and the university. Therefore, social insurance, pensions, etc. must be processed and managed by the recipients themselves.

Q1-5 Will the income from this fellowship become the object of income tax and inhabitant tax?

A1-5 Of the amount paid to recipients, the research expenses (amount equivalent to living expenses) are taxable as miscellaneous income. Therefore, the research expenses become the object of income tax and resident tax. please contact your local tax office for details. Please also refer to "9. Amount of research fellowship and research expenses (2021 Academic Year) [Cautions]" in the Application Guidelines.

Q1-6 What kind of human resources does Hokkaido University envision as a "DX doctoral fellowship"?

A1-6 The goal of this fellowship, "DX doctoral fellowship" is not to develop human resources who can excel in digital technology. The rapid development of information technology in recent years has brought about major changes in all areas of society, and is leading the world of Society 5.0, in which physical space (the real world) and cyber space are integrated together for improving the well-being of people. Based on such social background in this fellowship program, we are looking for students who design an ideal future society in 10, 20, 50 years' time by deep knowledge, theory, and technology in his/her research fields, and have enthusiasm for acquiring and improving the skills necessary to play an active role in such a society. These human resources will acquire a basic understanding of digital technologies such as IT and AI in this fellowship program. We define "DX doctoral fellowship" as those who can contribute to solving problems in the real world and future society by exploring DX methods.

Q1-7 Will this fellowship also support students majoring in humanities/social sciences?

A1-7 We believe that the "Society 5.0 world" mentioned in A1-6 above will come regardless of the research fields. Therefore, this fellowship is open to any research field, including humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, technology, etc. All research disciplines are welcome.

Q1-8 It has been announced that interviews may be conducted in the student selection process. If so, when will the interview be conducted? Is it possible to have an interview in English?

A1-8 If an interview is to be conducted, we will contact each eligible student individually. We will also ask whether the student would like to have an interview in Japanese or English.

Q1-9 My current research is not related to DX at all, can I still apply?

A1-9 Even if your current research is not related to DX, we believe that DX, data science, and information technology will be indispensable in the society in

which doctoral graduates will be active. You can apply for this fellowship if you are willing to learn how digital technologies relate to and influence your future research or the fields you intend to pursue.

Q1-10 I am so busy with my doctoral research activities that I don't have much time for anything else. How much time will I have to spend on the project?

A1-10 This project emphasizes students' independent learning attitudes, so you can decide which curriculum to take and how much to take depending on what you want to learn. Many of the data science courses are offered on-demand, in small groups, and in shorter curricula, you can set up a flexible plan and take classes according to your research situation.

Q1-11 I do not have basic knowledge to learn digital technology. Is it mandatory to learn digital and IT technologies if I participate in this program?

A1-11 The purpose of this project is not for all participating students to master digital technologies nor to study DX, but to enable them to understand DX from their own standpoints through participation in this project. In other words, the purpose is to enable them to think about how digital technology and data science will and should change their future research and the society, from a broader perspective. This project offers a wide range of curricula for understanding DX, from basic to applied and practical subjects, so that students can choose the content that best suits their background and needs, and we plan to create new curricula based on the requests of participating students.

2. Eligible students

Q2-1 Are students entering a doctoral degree course from other universities also eligible? Is it also possible to apply for students who enrolled in October 2021?

A2-1 Yes, they are eligible. If you have completed a special education program at another university, please provide a certificate of completion or an alternative document. If you are unable to do so, please ask your (tentative) supervisor to prepare a letter of recommendation.

Students who will enroll in October 2021 are also eligible to apply as outlined in "3. Eligibility, Application Categories, and Application Period" of the Application Guidelines, but please note that the application period differs from that of current students.

Q2-2 Is there an age limit?

A2-2 There is no age limit.

Q2-3 Are international students eligible for this fellowship?

A2-3 There is no nationality requirement for students eligible for support. However, international students who receive support under the Japanese Government (MEXT) Scholarship Program are not eligible for this program in order to avoid duplication of benefits. Moreover, students who are eligible for this program are required to have the intention and ability to be directly involved in the creation of science, technology, and innovation in Japan after completing.

Q2-4 Are working adult students (including those who have worked before) eligible for this fellowship? Is there an age limit?

A2-4 Students who have worked before are also eligible. However, working adult students are not eligible if they have a stable income, such as a salary or remuneration as a board member, which is sufficient to cover living expenses (based on a standard of 2,400,000 yen per year, taking into account other businesses, etc.).

If you are selected for this fellowship, the first payment will be made in December of this year, but the payment will be retroactive to October. Therefore, you may apply for this fellowship if both you and the company agree to immediately suspend your annual salary of 2,400,000 yen or more after the decision to provide the research fellowship. In such cases, as a general rule, we do not require the submission of a confirmation document, but it is desirable that both you and the company agree to this.

Q2-5 For working adult students, if they are able to receive sufficient amount of living expenses (based on other programs, 2,400,000 yen per year is the standard) from their company, etc., but do not receive it, are they not eligible?

A2-5 Not applicable.

Q2-6 Are working adult students who do not currently receive a salary from a company or do not receive an amount equivalent to living expenses (e.g., students who left a company early after entering the workforce and entered a doctoral course) also eligible?

A2-6 Yes, they are eligible.

Q2-7 Will the support continue even if a recipient who is eligible for support starts a business?

A2-7 The support will be continued. However, if the recipient is earning a stable income such as a salary or remuneration as a board member that is sufficient to cover living expenses (based on other businesses, 2,400,000 yen per year is the standard), the support will not be provided.

Q2-8 Is it possible for recipients to receive a salary as compensation for TA, RA, or joint research?

A2-8 Yes, as long as it does not interfere with the student's own research or the activities of the fellowship. However, please note that any income in excess of 2,400,000 yen per year will result in the loss of eligibility as a supported recipient.

Q2-9 Is it possible for recipients to work part-time?

A2-9 Yes, as long as it does not interfere with the student's own research or the activities of this fellowship. However, please note that if the recipient earns more than 2,400,000 yen per year, the recipient will lose eligibility for the fellowship.

Q2-10 Is it possible for recipients to do paid internships?

A2-10 Yes, our Fellowship encourages internships whether paid or unpaid. Paid internships which involve a closer relationship with the company are particularly recommended. However, please note that recipients who receive more than 2,400,000 yen per year will lose their eligibility for the fellowship.

Q2-11 Is it possible for eligible recipients to receive scholarships from the Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO)?

A2-11 There is no problem, as the fellowship is designed to "create an environment where students can devote themselves to research" and is different in nature from JASSO scholarships.

Q2-12 Is it possible for eligible students to receive a grant that is intended to support tuition fees (tuition waiver, scholarship to support tuition fees through the university's foundation, etc.)?

A2-12 There is no problem, as this fellowship is designed to "create an environment where students can devote themselves to research" and not to provide tuition assistance.

Q2-13 Is it possible to apply for this fellowship if I receive a scholarship from an incorporated foundation, etc., or if I earn less than 2,400,000 yen per year from a company?

A2-13 For those who receive a scholarship from an incorporated foundation, please check if the foundation allows the student to receive both the scholarship and this fellowship. If the foundation does not allow this, the student will not be able to receive both. Please note that the standard amount of income is 2,400,000 yen per year, so if your income is less than 2,400,000 yen per year, you may apply.

Q2-14 When recipients exceed the standard course duration, do they continue to be eligible?

A2-14 In the selection process for the 2021 academic year, the period up to the

standard course duration for each student will be calculated at the time of application, and eligible students will be selected based on that period. If a recipient exceeds the standard course duration, he/she will not be continuously supported. Therefore, recipients need to follow the research plan so that they do not exceed the standard course duration. From the 2022 academic year onward, only new students who enroll in April or October will be selected, so the maximum period of support will be three years (four years for four-year students).

Q2-15 Can recipients continue to be eligible for support even if they take a leave of absence?

A2-15 The decision on whether or not to suspend or extend support will depend on the reason for the leave of absence. If it becomes difficult for the student to continue research due to childbirth, childcare, injury or illness, etc., we may suspend support for the period of leave and allow an extension of the support period after the student returns to school. However, if the leave of absence extends over a long period of time, such as across a fiscal year, there may be problems with the budget and financial accounting system, so please consult with us as soon as possible if you anticipate a leave of absence, regardless of the reason or duration.

Q2-16 Can I apply if I am on a leave of absence at the time of application?

A2-16 JST requires that this fellowship is available only to those who are "enrolled" in a doctoral course, so applicants who are not enrolled at the time of application cannot apply.

Q2-17 Does this fellowship have a specific research field like the Ambitious Doctoral Fellowship?

A2-17 This fellowship does not have a specific research field.

Q2-18 Can students who are receiving support from the Hokkaido University President's Fellowship or the Hokkaido University Special Grant Program for Self-Supported International Students also apply?

A2-18 Yes, you can apply.

3. Research fellowship and research expenses

Q3-1 Is it possible to divert funds between the research fellowship (amount equivalent to living expenses) and research expenses?

A3-1 No, it is not.

Q3-2 How should I manage the research fellowship (amount equivalent to living expenses)?

A3-2 The university will pay the research fellowship (amount equivalent to living expenses) directly to the recipients but will not check on the use of the research fellowship. There are no restrictions on how the research fellowship is used, and unused part is not subject to refund.

Q3-3 How should I manage the research expenses?

A3-3 As part of the nurturing of the next generation of researchers, recipients are expected to manage and execute their own research expenses. Therefore, recipients will be required to undergo training on the prevention of misconduct in research activities in order to learn the norms of a researcher and the proper execution of research expenses.

In addition, in order to deal with specific administrative procedures and unclear points in the execution of research expenses, we will distribute a manual for the administration of research expenses to recipients and set up a dedicated contact point to respond to inquiries from recipients.

Q3-4 From which month does the payment of the research fellowship (amount equivalent to living expenses) start?

A3-4 If a student is selected as a recipient of support in November, the payment will start in October, but the actual payment will start in December. Also,

since the research fellowship (amount equivalent to living expenses) is to be paid in even-numbered months for two months including the following month, the four months from October to January will be paid in December.

Q3-5 After being selected as a recipient I decide to leave the university, is it necessary to return the research fellowship (amount equivalent to living expenses) and research expenses?

A3-5 In principle, there is no need to return either of these. However, in cases where the recipient has received the research fellowship (amount equivalent to living expenses) and research expenses illegally, the recipient may be asked to return all or part of the research fellowship (amount equivalent to living expenses) and research expenses.

Q3-6 Once a student has been selected as a recipient, will the research fellowship (amount equivalent to living expenses) and research expenses be covered during the standard course duration?

A3-6 In principle, support is provided during the standard course duration. However, Hokkaido University will conduct a continuation review each year to confirm that recipients are conducting their research activities in an appropriate manner. If it is judged that support should not be continued due to reasons such as extremely poor research activities, support may be terminated in the middle of this fellowship program.

4. Others

Q4-1 Will the recipients be announced?

A4-1 Since JST requires that information on recipients be made public in principle, we plan to make it public on our website. Please consult with us if there are any difficulties.

Q4-2 Is it necessary for the supported students to clearly state in their papers and presentations that they were supported by this fellowship?

A4-2 JST instructs that when you publish the research results obtained through

this fellowship, you must indicate that you have received support from JST. There is also an explanation in "8. Obligations of the Fellowship Recipients (6)" of the Application Guidelines. Details will be announced separately to recipients.

Q4-3 How will the relationship between this fellowship program and the "Hokkaido University Ambitious Doctoral Fellowship (Information Science and Technology/AI/SDGs)" under the MEXT fellowship program be organized?

A4-3 According to the JST FAQ, "In FY2021, two programs will coexist. MEXT will separately consider how the two projects should be implemented from FY2022". Therefore, Hokkaido University will organize the two programs according to the consideration by MEXT.