

FAQ for the Project on Training of Doctoral Students at Yamaguchi University through Interdisciplinary Research Practice Centering on Shin Monju Group (excerpt from JST Q&A and partially revised)

1. General

Q1-1 Does the financial support period for students continue until graduation?

A1-1 The financial support period is basically three years (four years for those enrolled in the 4-year doctoral course). For example, if those enrolled in the 3-year doctoral course do not complete the course even after three years, support will cease. Furthermore, the program manager may terminate support through evaluation.

Q1-2 When would selected students no longer be eligible to receive support from the support obligor?

A1-2 Selected students need to inform their obligor that the living expenses provided to them are treated as miscellaneous income under tax laws, in order for the obligor to enquire at their workplace regarding health insurance procedures and dependence allowance. Furthermore, students are requested to contact their local tax office regarding exemption for dependents of income earners who are employed.

Q1-3 Does an employment relationship exist between selected students and Yamaguchi University?

A1-3 The financial support through this program is to promote doctoral students to freely pursue interdisciplinary and challenging research creatively; therefore, there is no employment relationship between selected students and Yamaguchi University. Selected students must make their own arrangements for their pension and social insurance.

Q1-4 Is the income earned by the selected students subject to taxation?

A1-4 Living expenses are treated as miscellaneous income and are therefore subject to taxation. Selected students need to include them in their tax returns.

2. Eligible candidates

Q2-1 Are doctoral students from other universities' master programs eligible?

A2-1 Yes.

Q2-2 Is there an age limit? For example, are senior doctoral students who retire at the retirement age eligible?

A2-2 There is no age limit; however, students are selected based on the objectives of the project, including the development of various career paths, to advance excellent doctoral students who will play an active role in a wide range of fields.

Q2-3 Are international students eligible?

A2-3 There is no nationality requirement; however, Japanese government-financed international students are excluded to avoid duplicating recipients. The selection of students is based on the policy purpose of the project, which is to strengthen support for excellent doctoral students who intend to bear the future of science, technology, and innovation in Japan. Selected students are expected to be directly involved in contributing to these fields in Japan after graduation.

Q2-4 Are working students who do not receive any financial support from their company eligible for support even if they have sufficient means to cover their living expenses (2,400,000 yen per year)?

A2-4 This project aims to improve the environment in which doctoral students can devote themselves to research by providing them with living expenses; therefore, if companies have a system that provides them with sufficient financial support, they are not eligible.

Q2-5 Are doctoral students enrolled in a doctoral course after commencing work upon graduation and quit early eligible?

A2-5 Yes

Q2-6 Does the financial support continue if selected students start a business?

A2-6 Yes; however, they are excluded if they receive a stable income including salary and executive compensation at a sufficient level of living expenses (2,400,000 yen per year).

Q2-7 Would it be possible for selected students to receive salary as consideration for TA, RA, or joint research?

A2-7 There is no problem as long as this does not prevent them from pursuing research and engaging in educational programs for career development.

Q2-8 Would it be possible for selected students to work at a part-time job?

A2-8 There is no problem as long as this does not prevent them from pursuing research and engaging in educational programs for career development.

Q2-9 Would it be possible for selected students to collect research funds through crowdfunding?

A2-9 There is no problem as long as this does not prevent them from pursuing research and engaging in educational programs for career development.

Q2-10 Would it be possible for selected students to undertake paid internship?

A2-10 Yes, no problem.

Q2-11 Would it be possible for selected students to conduct research by obtaining external research funds?

A2-11 There is no problem as long as this does not prevent them from pursuing research and engaging in educational programs for career development.

Q2-12 Would it be possible for selected students to receive scholarships from the Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO)?

A2-12 This project aims to improve the environment in which doctoral students can devote themselves to study. Since the nature of financial support is different from the scholarship of JASSO, there is no problem.

Q2-13 Would it be possible for selected students to receive a grant for tuition assistance, including tuition exemption and scholarships from the university fund to support tuition fees?

A2-13 Since this project aims to improve the environment in which doctoral students can devote themselves to study, and not to support tuition fees, there is no problem.

Q2-14 Would it be possible for selected students to receive a prize, including monetary prizes, as a supplementary award?

A2-14 Yes, no problem.

Q2-15 Would it be possible for selected students to receive financial aid from

donations to university and alumni associations as living expenses?

A2-15 Yes, no problem.

Q2-16 Would it be possible for selected students to receive restricted financial aid, intended only to be used for the purposes mentioned below:

Grant for tuition fee support

Research grant

Travel expenses

A2-16 Yes, no problem.

Q2-17 If selected students are absent from school, will they continue to receive financial aid?

A2-17 If students have difficulty in pursuing their research due to childbirth, childcare, injury, or disease, financial aid may be suspended or prolonged depending on the circumstances. If the length of absence is for a long period and spreads across two fiscal years, there may be problems with the budget and financial accounting system; therefore, the payment method will be dealt with on an individual basis.

Q2-18 Are 3rd grade (4th grade in the 4-year doctoral course) doctoral students who have only six months left until graduation eligible?

A2-18 Yes.

Expenses in general

Q3-1 How are the living expenses paid?

A3-1 Living expenses are divided proportionally by month and transferred to the designated bank account. However, there is no limit on their use.

Q3-2 How are the research expenses paid?

A3-2 Research expenses are distributed to supervisors. The selected students must execute a budget via their supervisors. Any remaining amount must be returned.

Q3-3 Are there any points to note on use of expenses?

A3-3 Since tax money is spent on this project, selected students should do their best to optimize their use of expenses, so that they can achieve maximum results at a fair and minimum cost.

Q3-4 Would it be possible for selected students to use research expenses to purchase facilities intended for use by the existing joint research group?

A3-4 It is possible; however, because facilities and equipment purchased in this project should be under the control of a good manager and used efficiently in accordance with the objectives of the project, additional expenses to be used together to purchase the facilities and equipment are prohibited if management after termination of the project will be difficult.

Q3-5 If selected students plan to personally purchase voluntary insurance for disaster or injuries during their research activities, would it be possible to use the research expenses to pay the premium.

A3-5 Research expenses should not be used to pay a voluntary insurance premium that students have personally purchased; however, they can be used if insurance is required based on the regulations around the research, including in the case where students conduct joint research with researchers who belong to other institutions outside the university, and the institutions require students to purchase insurance.

Q3-6 Can the research expenses be used for patent expenses?

A3-6 Application, registration, maintenance, conservation, and consultation fees of patent attorneys for new patents based on R&D results during this project cannot be paid for with research expenses. This is the case for international patents. If the patent rights belong to the university, you can use the Support System to Utilize Intellectual Property Management by JST. Please refer to the following statement: https://www.jst.go.jp/chizai/pat/p_s_00summary.html.

Q3-7 Can research expenses be used for university facility fees?

A3-7 The university is expected to administer the facilities; therefore, it is not recommended to use research expenses to pay for this. If the facilities are used only for this project and selected students are required to pay facility fees based on university regulations, research expenses can only be used for maintenance and management fees if documentary evidence is furnished.

Q3-8 Can research expenses be used for students' overseas travel expenses as well as participation in educational programs for their career development?

A3-8 Yes.

4 Miscellaneous

Q4-1 Should selected students specify that they are supported by this program on their research papers?

A4-1 Students need to indicate that they have received financial aid through this program when presenting their research results.

An example of indication in the acknowledgment follows:

This work was supported by JST SPRING (grant number JP<JSPxxxx).

If you are supported by two programs, please indicate program names and systematic numbers.