October 27, 2026
JICE JDS Project Office in Cambodia

Application Guidelines for the JDS Doctoral Degree Program 2026

(10th Doctoral Cohort, JDS Cambodia 27th Batch)

The Project for Human Resource Development Scholarship (JDS)

1. Purpose (Basic Principle)

This project aims at fostering future leaders with a good understanding of Japan and are capable of;

1) Making policy formulation and decision from a broader perspective by drawing on their advanced knowledge and expertise,
2) Leading international discourses on various policy issues on behalf of their countries, and
3) Exercising their positive influence within their countries and beyond from the global viewpoints by fully utilizing personal networks developed through this doctoral program,

Prospective Applicants must have the potential for becoming **future leaders rather than academic researchers who can substantially influence policy affairs, as well as the potential for contributing to strengthening bilateral relations with Japan**

2. Eligibility Requirements and Conditions

【Eligibility Requirements】

Applicants must:

1. Be a citizen of Cambodia.
2. Have obtained a **master's degree from a recognized university**.
3. Be **45 years of age or younger** as of April 1, **2027**.
4. Have served as **a civil servant working at the central level in a "Target Organization"** listed in the JDS Framework Cambodia.
5. **Have published** at least **one peer-reviewed article or paper** in a field relevant to the proposed research.

※ **Applicants who have NOT published any peer-reviewed articles or papers** may still be eligible to apply, provided that they submit the following two documents:

1) A feasible and appropriate **research plan** prepared by the applicant for completing a doctoral degree within three years.
2) A research **supervision plan** prepared by the applicant's **intended faculty supervisor** for completing the doctoral degree within three years (to be attached to the supervisor's recommendation letter).

【Other Conditions】

Applicants must:

1. Independently identify and select their preferred university and graduate school to apply to, contact a prospective academic supervisor, and obtain the **recommendation letter** required for the application.

※ Neither the JDS Project nor JICE will introduce or recommend universities or supervisors.
※ Applicants who obtained **a master's degree in Japan (including JDS graduates)** are, **in principle, expected to enroll in the same graduate school at the university from which they obtained their master's degree**, unless exceptional circumstances apply.

2. Also obtain a letter of **recommendation from their workplace**.

※ Applicants who are subject to any return-to-service obligations, contracts, or other requirements imposed by their employer after completing their master's degree must have fulfilled those requirements before applying for the JDS PhD Program.

※ **Note for Fellows and Graduates of the JDS Master's Degree Program**

1) Direct progression from a master's program to a doctoral program is not permitted. Applicants must return to Cambodia and resume their official duties after completing the master's program before applying for the PhD Program.

2) The JDS Master's graduates are normally required to resume **at least two years of duties** after completing the master's program. However, they **may apply for the PhD Program before fulfilling this requirement by deferring the obligation until after completion of the PhD Program**. In such cases, the deferred two-year service obligation will be added to the minimum three-year post-graduation service requirement under the JDS PhD Program. Applicants may therefore be required to serve their organizations for **up to five years after obtaining a doctoral degree**.

3. Submit a **research proposal** addressing Cambodia's development challenges **within the scope of the Sub-Programs and Components defined in the JDS Framework**.
4. Be pursuing a career path as a government official and future leader in public administration.

※ Accordingly, **individuals whose career paths are primarily academic, technical, or professional in nature, such as lecturers, researchers, healthcare professionals, engineers, or inspectors, are NOT eligible to apply**.

5. Complete the doctoral program within three (3) years.

※ An extension of up to six (6) months may be granted if the applicant is deemed likely to obtain the doctoral degree within the extended period.

6. Have a good command of written and spoken English.
7. Be in good physical and mental health.
8. **(Upon completion of the PhD Program)** return to Cambodia, resume service in their respective organizations, and fulfill **a minimum post-graduation service obligation of three (3) years** in order to contribute to their organizations and to Cambodia's development.

※ Applicants must also comply with any separate contracts or regulations concerning return-to-service obligations imposed **by their employer or organization**.

【Ineligibility】 Applicants who fall under any of the following categories are **not eligible** to apply

1. Individuals who have been awarded, or are scheduled to receive, another scholarship.
2. Individuals who hold a doctoral degree obtained abroad under a foreign-funded scholarship or assistance program.
3. Military personnel and individuals affiliated with military organizations.

3. Framework for Cambodia (Target Organization and Component)

✓ The framework below is established for the JDS Master's Degree Program in Cambodia every four years **in accordance with Japan's development cooperation policy**. The same framework also applies to the JDS PhD Program in Cambodia.

✓ Applicants for the JDS PhD Program must be working for one of the **Target Organizations** and submit a **research proposal** **that addresses development challenges in Cambodia** **within the scope of the Components** defined in the Framework below.

■ **List of Target Organizations [Please download from JDS website]**

Sub-Programs	Components (CP) Please download CP information available on the JDS website
1. Transformation and Development of Industries	1-1 Strengthening Connectivity
	1-2 Promoting a Digital Economy and Society
	1-3 Private Sector Development
2. Achieving Sustainable and Equitable Growth	2-1 Environment, Climate Change, Agriculture Development
	2-2 Promoting Human Development
3.Realization of Safe and Secure Society	3-1 Improvement of Administrative Functions
	3-2 Legal and Judicial Development
	3-3 Building of International Relations

4. Outline of the Program

1. Acceptable number Maximum 2 Fellows

2. Study Period Maximum three (3) years (**September 2027** - September 2030)

※ Applicants must ensure that the graduate school to which they intend to apply offers autumn admission, as **the JDS PhD Program supports autumn enrollment only**.

3. Award Benefits

- The scholarship grant is equivalent to that of MEXT Scholarships for Doctoral course (https://www.mext.go.jp/content/20250413-mxt-kotokoku01-000041728_002.pdf)
- Amount for each allowance equivalent to those provided under the JDS Master's Program JDS-Support | Student Life | JDS (https://jds-scholarship.org/studentlife/jds-support.html)
- Round-trip airfare between Cambodia and Japan
- University-related expenses covered by JDS, including university application fees, admission fees, tuition, and travel expenses for academic advisor(s) supporting the Fellows' research

4. Support for Fellows while in Japan

- Support services for Fellows enrolled in doctoral programs will be equivalent to those provided to Fellows in master's programs. After their arrival in Japan, JICE will provide support services including assistance with settling in, regular monitoring, payment of allowances, and emergency assistance. JDS-Support | Student Life | JDS (https://jds-scholarship.org/studentlife/jds-support.html)
- The above-mentioned scholarship, allowances, and support services are provided solely to the JDS Fellow as support necessary for pursuing studies in Japan.

5. Application and Selection Process

1. Application Period: **November 4, 2026 – January 4** (at 3:00 pm)**, 2027**

2. Application Method: Online application

3. Selection

(1) Basic Eligibility Check (conducted by JICE)

(2) **First Selection: Document Screening by the OC (*Mid Jan 2027 – Early Feb*)**

※ This screening may be omitted depending on the number of applications received.

(3) Medical Examination (arranged by JICE)

(4) **Second Selection: Interview by the OC (*Mid Feb*)**

(5) **Approval of Final Candidates by the OC (*Early Mar*)**

※ This constitutes "**conditional acceptance**," as each university may conduct an additional selection process.

(6) **Applications to Universities (*Generally Apr – Jun*)**

※ **Application deadlines vary depending on the graduate school and program**. Applicants are responsible for confirming the application schedule of their intended program. **If the application deadline falls before the completion of the JDS selection process, applicants will be required to pay the application fee themselves. The fee will be reimbursed only if the applicant is selected through the JDS selection process**.

(7) **Screening by Universities (*Apr – Jun*)**

※ If a written examination or interview in Japan is required by the graduate school, the associated travel expenses will be covered by the JDS Project

(8) Notification of the University's Admission Decision **(*Jun - Aug*)**

(9) **Announcement of Successful Candidates (*Jun – Aug* * *Depending on the university*)**

Notes

※ All costs incurred during the selection process will be covered by the JDS Project.

※ Applicants will be immediately disqualified if their applications contain any false statements or instances of plagiarism.

※ The JICE JDS project office will notify applicants of the results at each stage of the selection process.

※ The reasons for selection decisions will not be disclosed.

6. Application Procedures (Online)

6-1 Application Documents

✓ Applicants must **upload** the "**application documents**" in **Table 1** via the **online application system**.

✓ Applicants are **strongly advised to have all the documents ready** before proceeding with the online application system.

Table 1 Application Documents to be Uploaded

✻ For the items marked with (★), please download the **prescribed forms** from the JDS website (PhD)

✻ The following documents (except No.10) must be **converted and combined into ONE PDF file per item** to upload.

1	**★Short essays**	Work responsibilities and achievements / Outcomes of the master's program / Leadership potential / Contributions to strengthening bilateral relationships with Japan / Career plan
2	**★Research plan**	➢ Must be relevant to one of the development issues (Components) in the framework.
3	**Graduation Certificate** (Master's degree)	➢ Attach an official English translation If not written in English ➢ If information is provided on the **back page**, include it in the PDF. ➢ Original or certified true copy will be required during or after the selection
4	**Transcripts** (Master's degree)	
5	**★Reference letter (1)** (from university)	➢ Must be completed by the applicant's prospective academic supervisor at the university to which the applicant intends to apply ※ Applicants **without any peer-reviewed publications** are required to additionally ask their prospective supervisor to provide an **academic supervision plan** (see Section 2. Eligibility Requirements). ➢ **Must be submitted directly by the supervisor to the JDS office by e-mail** **Note:** The issuance of this letter does not imply or guarantee acceptance by the university. Please also note that a prospective supervisor may not always be able to provide a letter of support or recommendation due to various academic or administrative considerations. Applicants are requested to respect such decisions and avoid persistent requests that may cause inconvenience to the university or faculty member concerned.
6	**★Reference letter (2)** (from workplace)	➢ Must be completed by the applicant's current supervisor ➢ Must be written in English or accompanied by an official English translation
7	**Copy of passport**	➢ Must be a valid passport
8	**★Employment record**	➢ Must be issued and authorized by the responsible department of workplace ➢ The workplace's own form may be used if it covers all required information
9	**★Permission letter** (from workplace)	➢ Must be issued and authorized by the person or department in charge at applicant's workplace
10	**Photo file**	➢ A color photo taken within the past three months (File extension: jpg / jpeg / png / gif) ➢ Must be 4:3 (height: width) aspect ratio and be taken against a plain background
11	**English score**	➢ A TOEFL or IELTS score issued within the past two years ※ If applicants are unable to submit the score, they may submit one of the following documents as an alternative: **i.** A letter or other official documentation issued by the university certifying that the applicant's master's program was conducted and supervised in English; **or** **ii.** A letter from the applicant's master's supervisor certifying that the applicant possesses sufficient English proficiency to conduct academic research in English.

6-2 Application Steps

Step (1) Prepare Application Documents

- Gather all the required documents listed in Table 1.
- To download the designated form★, you will need **a password**. Please visit the JDS website (PhD), complete and submit the **request form**, and obtain the password.

Step (2) Convert Documents to PDF

- Combine and convert each set of documents (Item 1-11) into a single PDF file **per item**, using **portrait orientation only.** *Files in landscape orientation will not be accepted.*
- Ensure that both sides of any double-sided documents are included (e.g., university transcripts).
- **See Full instruction provided in Khmer language**
  https://jds-scholarship.org/country/cambodia/dl/Precaution.pdf

Step (3) Access the Online Application System

- Through the JDS website, please access the online application system.
- Follow the system instructions to enter your information and upload the required files.
- After submission, keep **your "Entry No." and "Application Number."** given by the system. This number will be used to manage all stages of the selection process.

7. Selection (Evaluation) Criteria

The JDS Operating Committee will evaluate and select candidates based on the following criteria:

1. Leadership Qualifications and Potential to Strengthen Bilateral Relations with Japan

- Demonstrated track record of leadership
- Achievements and a clear vision for contributing to Cambodia's development
- Commitment to Cambodia's future development and growth
- Professional achievements (e.g., work experience, contributions to the applicant's organization, and application of outcomes from the JDS Program)
- Consistency among the applicant's career to date, proposed research theme, and future vision for contributing to policy formulation and implementation
- Specific plans for contributing to stronger bilateral relations with Japan
- A positive and cooperative attitude toward strengthening relations with Japan

2. Relevance of the Research Theme to Cambodia's Development Challenges

- Potential of the proposed research to help address Cambodia's development challenges

3. Academic Record and Achievements in the master's Program

- Strong academic performance, publication of peer-reviewed articles or papers, and presentations at academic conferences or seminars

4. Readiness of the Prospective University

- Recommendation letter, evaluation by the prospective academic advisor(s), and proposed academic supervision plan

8. Contact

JICE JDS Project Office in Cambodia

Office Hour: 8:00-12:00 / 14:00-17:00, Monday through Friday

(TEL: 023-217944 / Mobile: 012-681611)

Unit No. 306 of Aura Condominium building, #87, Street 63, Phnom Penh, Cambodia