

Application Guidelines for JDS PhD 2025 (PhD 9th for 26th batch)

The Project for Human Resource Development Scholarship (JDS) in Cambodia

1. Purposes (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,

This project is seeking for **prospective applicants** with the **potential to become future leaders, rather than academic researchers, who can substantially make influence on policy affairs.**

2. Eligibility Requirements and Conditions

The applicant must;

1. Be a citizen of Cambodia
2. Be a **JDS Master's graduate who is civil servant or personnel of designated organizations¹**
3. Be **45 years old or younger** (as of April 1st, 2026)
4. In principle, **1) have published, 2) have a prospect for publication, or 3) have a concrete plan for publication with the supervisor at least one peer-reviewed article/ paper.**
5. Have returned to work **after graduation from the JDS Master's program for a minimum of two years (reinstatement rule)**, as required by the JDS rules.

※ Note that applicants who additionally meet **all** the following conditions may apply to the doctoral program **without fulfilling the two-year work requirement**, by **postponing the enforcement** of the reinstatement rule. This exception applies to those who are currently enrolled in the JDS Master's program or have just completed it and wish to proceed to the doctoral program without an interval.

Condition 1 The applicant must obtain official permission from their current employer to apply for the JDS Ph.D. program and, if accepted by JDS, to return to Japan for further study. The employer must also guarantee that the applicant will be able to return to their workplace after completing the Ph.D. program. (*For details, please refer to the Permission Letter among the application documents*)

Condition 2 The applicant must participate in the selection process in the schedule and location specified by JDS (e.g., an interview in Cambodia).

Condition 3 If accepted into the Ph.D. program under this exception, the applicant will be required to fulfill a **minimum five-year work obligation** after completing the doctoral program. This includes:

- The two-year reinstatement obligation (originally required after the Master's program), which is deferred until after the Ph.D., and the three-year obligation following the Ph.D. program.
- If the applicant can officially demonstrate a reinstatement period between the end of the Master's program and the start of the doctoral program, that period may be deducted from the total five-year obligation.
- This five-year obligation is the minimum requirement set by JDS. If the applicant's workplace imposes additional conditions, those must also be followed.

Condition 4 Applicants who proceed directly from the master's program to the doctoral program must, in principle, begin the Ph.D. program immediately after graduation, without returning to their home country in between, unless exceptional circumstances are officially recognized.

¹ National Bank of Cambodia, Electricity of Cambodia, Water Supply Authority, Autonomous Port, Telecom Cambodia

【Other Conditions】

1. Understand the purpose of the JDS Project and the JDS Ph.D. program described above.
2. In principle, enroll in the same graduate school where obtained a master's degree under the JDS.
3. Complete the course within, and not exceeding, three (3) years. However, fellows may be allowed to extend their studies for up to 6 months if they are judged to be highly likely to obtain a degree.

【Ineligibility】 A person falls under any of the following items is not eligible

1. Has been awarded or scheduled to receive other scholarships.
2. is a doctoral degree holder obtained abroad under the support of foreign assistance.
3. Military personnel or those who belong to affiliated organizations.

3. Framework for Cambodia

- The framework below is set for JDS Master Program every 4 years based on Japan's aid policy. This framework is also applied to JDS PhD Program in Cambodia.
- **Applicants for JDS PhD program must propose research relevant to one of the Components (Development issues) below.**

Sub-Programs	Components
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. Strengthening of Governance	3-1 Improvement of Administrative Functions
	3-2 Legal and Judicial Development
	3-3 Building of International Relations

4. Acceptance, Period and Style of Study

1. **Acceptable number:** Maximum 2 Fellows
2. **Study Period:** Maximum three (3) years (Enrollment: September 2026, Graduation: September 2029)
3. **Possible Style of Study:**

In principle, 3 years in Japan. But, for Fellows who have a difficulty in leaving their workplace for the 3 years, it is possible for them to stay in Japan, for example, for two (2) years for research and to complete the thesis in the last third year in their home country with a sufficient consultation with the Fellow's academic advisor(s) in advance.

5. Application and Selection Process

1. **Application Period** September 14 to November 14, 2025
2. **Application** Online application (See Section 11 below)
3. **Selection**
 - (1) Basic (Qualification) Check (by JICE)
 - (2) **(Document screening by the Committee)**
 - ※ This screening may not be conducted depending on the number of applications.
 - (3) Health check-up (arranged by JICE)

- (4) **Interview by the Operating Committee (Mid Jan. 2026)**
- (5) **Approval of the final candidates by the Committee (Early Feb)**
 ※ This is a “conditional acceptance” because each university may have further selection.
- (6) **Application for the Universities (Apr - Jun)**
- (7) **Screening by the University (Apr - Jun)**
 ※ The application and screening process (6) and (7) depends on the universities. Some require an interview or written exam in Japan (the traveling cost for the exam will be covered by JDS)
- (8) **Notice of acceptance by the University (Jul)**
- (9) **Announcement of Final Successful Candidate (July 2026)**

4. Notes

- (1) All the selection costs will be covered by the JDS project.
- (2) Any false statements or plagiarism found in the application will result in immediate disqualification.
- (3) The results of each selection step will be notified by the JICE JDS office.
- (4) The reasons for the selection results will not be disclosed.

6. Selection (Evaluation) Criteria

1. Leadership Qualifications and possibility of strengthening bilateral relations with Japan
 - Track records of demonstrating leadership
 - Accomplishments and visions to contribute to the development of the country
 - Achievements at work (e.g., work history, contributions, utilization of outcomes of JDS),
 - Consistency between the career up to the present and the research theme / future vision in terms of contribution to policy making and implementation)
 - Visions, plans, and possibilities to strengthen bilateral relations with Japan
2. Relevance of the Research Theme to the Development Issues of the Target Country
 - Prospect of the research towards improvement of the development Issues in their country, etc.
3. Academic Transcripts and Academic Accomplishments in the Master Course
 - Sufficient academic results, experiences of publishing peer reviewed papers, experiences of presenting at academic conferences/ seminars, etc.
4. Readiness of the Accepting University
 - Recommendation letter, evaluation by the expected academic advisor/s, and academic guidance outline, etc.

7. Award Benefits

1. The scholarship grant is equivalent to that of MEXT Scholarships for Doctoral course
2. The amount for each allowance is equivalent to that of JDS Master's program.
3. Round-trip airfare to Japan
4. Other financial support: Application fee for the university, admission fee, tuition fee, traveling cost for academic advisor(s) to support the fellows' research.

8. Support for the Fellows while stay in Japan

Support services for the Fellows in Doctoral courses will be equivalent to those for Master courses. The implementing agent will provide post-arrival support services including settlement assistance, monitoring, payment of allowances, and emergency assistance.

10. After returning home

The Fellows will be required to participating in a reporting program held by the Operating Committee in their home country. Moreover, **JDS Ph.D. program for Cambodia sets a minimum 3-year contribution** to the Fellow's workplace and the development of Cambodia.

11. Application Procedures

For application, please prepare **the following documents**, then fill out the **online application form**, from which you can **upload these documents** and submit your application.

Online Application form and documents for upload

Notes		
Online Application Form (AF)	<p>➤ Please contact JDS office to obtain the access link to the online application.</p> <p>➤ AF contains the following entry fields Check list / Applicant info / Education background / Career background / Upload page for the documents below / Questionnaires, etc.</p> <p>➤ After you submit your application, the system will send you a copy of your application form</p>	
	<p>Application documents for upload</p> <p>✓ The following documents are recommended to be prepared before proceeding to the online application</p> <p>✓ The prescribed forms specified by “★” below can be downloaded from JDS website (Ph.D. page)</p> <p>✓ For each item below, convert and combine them into ONE PDF file to each for upload</p> <p>※ Important Please make all documents PDF in portrait orientation, even those written in landscape orientation. The landscape PDF will be rejected due to the system specifications.</p> <p>※ Documents with information on both sides, such as transcripts, should be submitted including the reverse side.</p>	
1	★ Short essays	<p>➤ The short essays include the following descriptions Work responsibility and achievement / Outcomes from JDS master's program / Leadership potentiality / Expected contribution to strengthen bilateral relationships with Japan / Career plan</p> <p>※ Convert and combine into ONE PDF file</p>
2	★ Research plan	<p>➤ Be relevant to one of the development issues (components) set in the framework (See 3)</p> <p>※ Convert and combine into ONE PDF file</p>
3	Graduation Certificate (Master's degree)	<p>➤ Attach official English translation If not written in English</p> <p>➤ Original or attested original can be required during or after the selection</p> <p>※ Convert and combine into ONE PDF file</p>
4	Transcripts (Master's degree)	
5	★ Reference letter (1) (from university)	<p>➤ Must be filled by an academic advisor of applicant's choice at the application university</p> <p>➤ Must be directly submitted from the advisor to JICE JDS office via e-mail</p> <p>Note that this letter does NOT necessarily indicate acceptance by the university</p>
6	★ Reference letter (2) (from workplace)	<p>➤ Must be filled by the current supervisor of the applicant</p> <p>➤ Must be written in English or accompanied by official English translation</p> <p>※ Convert and combine into ONE PDF file</p>
7	Copy of passport	<p>➤ Can be replaced by national ID if passport is not available (* must be accompanied by official translation if not written in English)</p> <p>※ Convert and combine into ONE PDF file</p>
8	★ Employment record	<p>➤ Must be issued and authorized by responsible department of applicant's workplace</p> <p>➤ Form at workplace can be accepted as long as necessary information is covered</p> <p>※ Convert and combine into ONE PDF file</p>
9	★ Permission letter	<p>➤ Must be issued and authorized by the responsible person or department at applicant's workplace for your application and study in Japan</p> <p>※ Convert and combine into ONE PDF file</p>
10	Photo file	<p>➤ Color photo taken within the last 3 months (File extension: jpg / jpeg / png / gif)</p> <p>➤ 4:3 (height: width) aspect ratio and must be taken against a plain background</p>
11	English score (if any)	<p>➤ Score sheet of TOEFL or IELTS taken within the last 2 years is accepted</p> <p>※ Convert and combine into ONE PDF file</p>
<p>Applications that fall under any of the following conditions will not be accepted or will be disqualified</p> <p>Incomplete documents / Application after the deadline / Falsifications or deception of application documents or information</p>		