

**Yokohama National University – Project for the Development of Inclusive Leadership
to Drive Sustainable Innovation**
Application Guidelines for 2025 YNU-SPRING Program
(for selection in fall 2025)

The Project for the Development of Inclusive Leadership to Drive Sustainable Innovation (hereafter referred to as “the Project”) proposed by Yokohama National University (YNU) has been adopted by the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) for the FY2024 Support for Pioneering Research Initiated by the Next Generation. Students enrolled in YNU’s doctoral programs are invited to apply to the YNU-SPRING program.

1. Aim

Japan is entering an age of rapid population decline associated with low birthrates. These demographic changes and the downturn in researcher population are extremely serious problems, especially at a time when science and technology have significant impacts on people’s lives. For Japan to ensure sustainable development, it will need to increase its population of researchers and engineers and produce human resources equipped with a high level of scientific knowledge who will actively make use of that knowledge in various fields and sectors of society. Therefore, at YNU, focusing on 10 years or more into the future, we aim to become a university that produces leaders who will drive sustainable innovation for Japan. To this end, we will build an environment where highly motivated students can continue to learn in doctoral programs without financial worries, nurture students’ capacities for self-expression to enable them to choose from diverse career paths, and equip them with advanced expertise to empower them to be active in a wide range of academic and social fields and sectors both in Japan and internationally. As part of a project to support students in doctoral programs, YNU has committed to the development of inclusive leadership to drive sustainable innovation.

In order to realize sustainable development of society in a rapidly changing world, it is important to foster human resources that embody inclusive leadership and gives rise to new value creation, rather than the forceful, conventional type of leadership. The Project’s aim is to nurture leaders with the capacity to build and foster an environment that embraces Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEI&B) conducive to innovation and with the skills to cooperate with others through inclusion by bringing out the individual strengths of team members with diverse backgrounds and characteristics. Through this Project, YNU aims to provide graduate school education to train people who will contribute to the sustainable development of Japan’s science, technology, and innovation. The Project calls for students who are highly motivated to contribute to Japan’s science, technology, and innovation, understand the aim of the Project, enroll in the courses offered by the Project, and are eager to enhance their research capabilities and the qualities required to be an inclusive leader. These students will be

selected to be “YNU-SPRING Students” and will be offered scholarships and other support. Those selected as YNU-SPRING Students are expected to participate in all activities required by the Project, meet the program completion requirements as specified by the Project, and be subject to completion review.

The Project offers core programs comprising a series of courses related to internationality, interdisciplinary research, career development, transferable skills, and internship, and advanced programs to develop and enhance international diversity, social diversity, and academic diversity. YNU-SPRING Students must take all core programs and select one advanced program to be recognized as having completed the YNU-SPRING minor program.

2. Support offered

The Project provides the following support to YNU-SPRING Students.

(1) Financial support

A monthly research incentive grant (for living expenses) of 180,000 yen (2,160,000 yen annually) will be provided to each selected student.

(2) Research support

An annual amount of 340,000 yen will be provided as research funding.

3. Support period

Maximum of three years from October 1, 2025*

However, regardless of the support period, support will only be paid up to the end of the standard program term. (For example, a student who entered the doctoral program in October 2024 and is selected as a YNU-SPRING Student will receive support for a maximum of two years.)

* For students who have not arrived in Japan, support will be paid after their entry to Japan has been confirmed.

4. Number of students to be accepted

(1) About 9 students enrolled in a YNU doctoral program in October 2024 or later.

If a student declines their offer after being selected as a YNU-SPRING Student, the position may be offered to the applicant who was rated the next-highest in the selection.

5. Application eligibility

If you meet all the requirements from (1) to (5), you are eligible to apply for the program.

(1) You are currently enrolled and were admitted to a YNU doctoral program in October 2024 or later, or you wish to enter a YNU doctoral program in October 2025.

(2) You are highly motivated to contribute to Japan’s science, technology, and innovation.

(3) You understand the aim of the Project, will enroll in the courses offered by the Project, and are

eager to enhance your research capabilities and the qualities required of an inclusive leader.

- (4) You are willing, if selected as a YNU-SPRING Student, to participate in all activities required by the Project.
- (5) You are willing to meet the program completion requirements as specified by the Project and to be reviewed for program completion.

However, if any of the following conditions apply, you are not eligible for application.

- (i) You have been selected for the Research Fellowship for Young Scientists by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS).
- (ii) You are an international student receiving support by the Japanese Government (MEXT) Scholarship for International Students; or an international student receiving scholarship or other support from your home country.
- (iii) You are receiving scholarship from a national government, private organization, or other entities and are not allowed to receive any funding other than the said scholarship.
- (iv) You have a stable annual income of 2,400,000 yen or more as salary or compensation from YNU, a private company/organization, or your own enterprise.(People who earn income that is not stable or fixed, such as part-time job (typically RA or TA), are eligible for support regardless of the amount.)
- (v) You are on a leave of absence or studying under the Long-Term Enrollment System.

Note1: If you become ineligible for the Project after submitting your application or after you have been selected as a YNU-SPRING Student, you will be required to withdraw from the Project.

Note2: It is possible to apply for both YNU-SPRING and YNU-BOOST, for which students will be invited to apply during the same period. However, students selected for YNU-BOOST will not be selected for YNU-SPRING.

Note3: A stable income does not include such as part-time job (typically RA or TA).

However, grant-type scholarships that can be received concurrently are regarded as stable income.

Note4: If you are a student who is selected as an early selection for the YNU-SPRING Program for the 2026 and enroll in a YNU doctoral program in October 2025, your acceptance for early selection in 2026 will be revoked. If you will enroll in the YNU-SPRING doctoral program in October 2025 and wish to receive support for the standard program term of three years, you must apply for the Fall 2025 selection.

6. Application

- (1) Application period: Friday, August 1 to noon on Wednesday, August 27, 2025
- (2) Application method: Applicants are to submit application as described below.

For applicants

Please access the URL below, fill in the necessary information, and prepare application forms according to the specified format (Form 1 and Form 2). Please also submit PDF versions of the application.

[URL for submission of application]

<https://forms.gle/ukCvJnUb4mPmFxbv7>



Download the forms from the URL below. When submitting the files, please name them as follows. “Form 1 Application_graduate school_name of applicant.pdf” and “Form 2 Application graduate school_name of applicant.pdf”. (Please write the name of the graduate school you plan to enter. Your graduate school at YNU should be written as follows: Graduate School of International Social Sciences -> ISS; Graduate School of Engineering Science -> ES; Graduate School of Environment and Information Sciences -> EIS; Graduate School of Urban Innovation -> UI. Note that Form 1 is the same as the one used for YNU-BOOST, to which students will be invited to apply separately.

[Forms available at the following URL]

Application form:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1VL66PcMWj607JxeyGtX3uc9OcbMs9iqK?usp=drive_link



7. Selection method, schedule, and criteria

(1) Method

Screening and selection will be a two-stage process, comprising Stage 1 screening and Stage 2 screening (for those who passed the Stage 1 screening). Stage 1 will be a document-based screening during which the submitted documents are grouped based on the broad section of Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (KAKENHI), and screened by YNU faculty members with expertise relevant to the applicant’s research field and broad scientific background. Applicants will be screened based on the contents of their research and their potential as a researcher in a broad sense. Stage 2 will be an interview with questions regarding the applicant’s views on sustainable innovation and inclusive leadership, and also from the perspective of assessing the applicant’s potential as a creator of innovation to drive science and society.

(2) Schedule

- (i) Application submission period: Friday, August 1 – noon on Wednesday, August 27
- (ii) Notification of Stage 1 (document screening) results: by Friday, September 12
- (iii) Stage 2 screening (interview): Tuesday, September 16 – Thursday, September 18
- (iv) Notification of final results: Results will be notified to the applicant by Friday, September 26.

At the same time, names and affiliation of the selected YNU-SPRING Students will be announced on the YNU website.

(3) Interview

The interview will take 15 minutes in total (6 minutes for explanation of contents/9 minutes for Q&A). Please prepare presentation material in advance.

The interview will focus on the following aspects in particular.

- (i) Envisioned career image
- (ii) Research content 1 (research overview and innovation image obtained from research results)
- (iii) Research content 2 (originality of research content)
- (iv) Research content 3 (Past research results)
- (v) Motivation for applying to become a YNU-SPRING student
- (vi) Currently wished advanced program

(4) Criteria

- (i) The background of how you arrived at the topic for your doctoral dissertation research and the research objectives are described in the application form in a way comprehensible to researchers of other fields, and the idea is of high quality. The research method is creative and original, and you have presented a clear vision of how your research might develop in the future.
- (ii) You have demonstrated sufficient potential to become a researcher who can carry the future of science.
- (iii) You have made clear your motivation for applying to the Project, your vision and plans for the advanced program, career plan after completing the program, and engagement with Japan's science, technology, and innovation.

8. Payment of research incentive grant and research funding

(1) Research incentive grant (for living expenses)

Monthly amounts will be paid into the YNU-SPRING Student's bank account by the end of each month as a general rule.

This grant is deemed as "other income" and is subject to income tax and inhabitant tax. You will need to take necessary procedures such as applying for social security and filing a tax return. If you are registered as a dependent of your parent or other guardian (person under a duty to support you) in a health insurance policy or for the purpose of receiving dependency allowance, be sure to contact your parent or guardian so they can check with their insurer or employer. If you have any questions about your tax status or filing of a tax return, please contact your local tax office.

(2) Research funding

Research funding must be handled according to YNU's rules. Be sure to manage and execute your research funding in a well-planned and independent manner for the purpose of appropriately carrying out your research.

(3) Points to note

If you have been selected as a recipient of Category 1 Scholarship Loan offered by the Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO) during your enrollment in the doctoral program and are also selected as a YNU-SPRING Student, you will be excluded from JASSO's repayment exemption system for recipients who have made outstanding achievements.

9. Obligations of YNU-SPRING Students

YNU-SPRING Students must...

- (1) Engage in research according to the research plan described in the application form and strive to deepen one's own research.
- (2) Complete the YNU-SPRING minor program (for details refer to the appendix).
- (3) Take research ethics courses as specified by YNU and ensure fair and ethical research practices.
- (4) Handle research findings according to YNU's rules and make efforts to protect intellectual property rights.
- (5) Apply for Doctoral Course 2 (DC2) Research Fellowship for Young Scientists offered by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS), if they are eligible for application.
- (6) Register in the dedicated matching system for "Cooperative Education through Research Internships".
- (7) Cooperate in follow-up surveys conducted by YNU or JST on employment status and research achievements for a period of 10 years after completing the Project.

10. Termination or cancellation of support

- (1) When any of the following conditions apply, a YNU-SPRING Student's support will be terminated, certification will be revoked, and payment of research incentive grant and research funding will be discontinued.
 - (i) You complete your doctoral program, withdraw from YNU, or are expelled from YNU
 - (ii) You no longer meet the eligibility requirements
 - (iii) Your fulfillment of the Obligations of YNU-SPRING Students is deemed insufficient
 - (iv) You receive disciplinary punishment
 - (v) You withdraw from the Project
 - (vi) You fail to complete your doctoral program by the end of the standard program term
 - (vii) You take a leave of absence
 - (viii) Others such as if the President of YNU or Doctoral Student Support Headquarters decides there is due reason to terminate or cancel the support
- (2) If payment of the research incentive grant has been completed for a student whose support is terminated or whose certification is canceled, YNU will bill the student for repayment of the research incentive grant.
- (3) When support for a student is terminated but the reason for termination has dissolved and it is

deemed appropriate to resume payment, payment may resume in some cases. (The same applies to termination of payment of research funding.)

11. Handling of personal information

- (1) The names and affiliation of YNU-SPRING Students are announced on the YNU website to ensure transparency.
- (2) Personal information submitted at time of application, evaluation and other personal information used for the screening and selection process, as well as evaluation and other personal information on the activities of YNU-SPRING Students, will be used for screening, evaluation, and other purposes related to the Project (including follow-up surveys after the student has completed the doctoral program).

12. Inquiries

Educational Affairs Division, Yokohama National University

MAIL : ynu-spring@ynu.ac.jp