

Academic Year 2025
Okayama University Support for Pioneering Research Initiated by the Next Generation
(OU-SPRING) Application Guidelines

Okayama University is calling for applications for the Okayama University Support for Pioneering Research Initiated by the Next Generation for FY2025. The OU-SPRING was established to assist students enrolling in the doctor's course and to cultivate young researchers capable of promoting Okayama University priority research fields with the intention of cultivating researchers capable of playing important roles in science, technology and innovation creation in Japan.

Okayama University will provide and distribute the living expenses and research budget as well as provide a wide range of approaches to improve research capability and support career paths.

1. Planned Enrollment Capacity

1st year student (3rd year student for five-year doctor's course): Approx. 30 students

2nd year student (4th year student for four-year doctor's course): few people

3rd year student (5th year student for four-year doctor's course): few people

4th year student: few people

* For details, please refer to "2. Qualification Requirements".

2. Qualification Requirements

Applicants for the OU-SPRING for FY2025 must fulfill the requirements listed below, be highly motivated to learn and concentrate on conducting research.

Working individuals are also eligible to apply. However, those who fall under any of the following are excluded:

- (1) Students who have stable income that is sufficient to live on*
- (2) Research Fellows (Young Scientists) of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science
- (3) Students from abroad receiving support through the Japanese Government (MEXT) Scholarship and scholarships from their own countries

* "Stable income that is sufficient to live on" here means 2,400,000 yen/year.

Program	Graduate Course	Requirements
Doctor's Course	Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences Graduate School of Natural Science and Technology (Excluding Division of Earth and Planetary Materials Science) Graduate School of Environmental, Life, Natural Science and Technology Graduate School of Health Sciences Graduate School of Environmental and Life Science Graduate School of Medicine, Dentistry and Pharmaceutical Sciences (Division of Pharmaceutical Sciences) Graduate School of Interdisciplinary Science and Engineering in Health Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students who are scheduled to enroll in April 2025 (Including individuals planning to take entrance examinations for graduate programs) *1• Students who are scheduled to enter their second year in April 2025 *2• Students who are scheduled to enter their third year in April 2025 *2

Five-year Doctor's Course	Graduate School of Natural Science and Technology (Division of Earth and Planetary Materials Science)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students who are scheduled to enter their third year in April 2025 *2 • Students who are scheduled to enter their fourth year in April 2025 *2 • Students who are scheduled to enter their fifth year in April 2025 *2
Four-year Doctor's Course in the Fields of Medicine, Dentistry, and Pharmaceutical Sciences	Graduate School of Medicine, Dentistry and Pharmaceutical Sciences (Excluding Division of Pharmaceutical Sciences)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students who are scheduled to enroll in April 2025 (Including individuals planning to take entrance examinations for graduate programs) *1 • Students who are scheduled to enroll their second year in April 2025 *2 • Students who are scheduled to enter their third year in April 2025 *2 • Students who are scheduled to enter their fourth year in April 2025 *2

*1 Including students admitted in October 2024.

*2 Including students who entered the relevant year in October 2024.

If you have any inquiries about qualification, please contact us as shown in “9. Contact/Address to Send Your Application.”

3. Amount of Support /Duration

OU-SPRING consists of research encouragement funding and research budget. The amount to be provided is as shown below.

(1) Research Encouragement Funding: 2,200,000 yen per year

* In principle, funding is paid every two months.

* **Research encouragement funding is provided for living expenses with the intention of helping to enable successful applicants to concentrate on their research.**

(2) Research Budget: Approx. 400,000 yen per year

* To be distributed after submission of the research plan to the OU-SPRING Office every academic year.

The period of distribution of the research encouragement funding and the research budget is the period, beginning from April 2025 in which the successful applicant is enrolled in the doctor's course, five-year doctor's course, or four-year doctor's course, and must be within the standard period of completion.

If the successful applicant takes a leave of absence from school, he/she will, in principle, no longer qualify for funding. However, if the recipient is expected to return to school to restart the research, the funding and budget may be temporarily suspended, and then restarted after the recipient returns to

school.

[Notes]

In the case that the applicant for OU-SPRING is the recipient of the following scholarships, the relevant scholarship amount shall be adjusted that the total annual amount of the scholarship and OU-SPRING will be maximum 2,800,000 yen.

- (1) Ohmoto Ikueikai Student Grant**
- (2) Okayama University Scholarship to Support Students in Doctor's Course**
- (3) Other scholarship provided by a graduate school or division of Okayama University (excluding one-time award for enrollment)**

If you have any questions about handling of the applicants who have already received these scholarships for 2025 academic year, please contact to “9. Contact/Address to Send Your Application (OU-SPRING Office)”.

In addition, if you are selected for OU-BOOST-AI, you must decline OU-SPRING.

4. Application Procedure

Students who have a desire to receive the OU-SPRING funding and budget must fill out and submit the following documents:

- Application Form (Submit as PDF)
- Evaluation Form (Submit as PDF and must be submitted directly to the OU-SPRING Office by the person who completes the Evaluation Form)
- Certificate of Estimated Income (For working individuals, etc. who have a regular income)

Submission Deadline: **Wednesday, September 25, 2024 (17:00 JST) [No Exceptions]**

Address to Send Your Application: OU-SPRING Office * Please submit via email.
ou-fellowship@adm.okayama-u.ac.jp

* Please send your e-mail with the title "2025_application_Name".

Applicants must ask their individual advisors (planned) or someone familiar with their research to fill out and submit the designated Evaluation Form. (The Evaluation Form must be submitted directly to the OU-SPRING Office by the person who completes the Evaluation Form.)

In principle, Application Form and Evaluation Form cannot be replaced once submitted, even if it is submitted before the due date. Please ensure sufficient time to complete the procedures for each form, and submit them in consultation with your individual advisor.

Please note that applications will not be accepted from applicants who have not submitted all documents by the submission deadline.

5. Selection Process

Successful applicants will be determined through document screening and online interview conducted by the OU-SPRING Screening Committee. The results of the document screening will be announced to the applicants by the end of October. Applicants who have passed the document screening will receive details regarding the online interview. The online interview is scheduled for early November. The results of the online interview will be announced to the applicants by the end of November.

If a successful applicant declines the OU-SPRING, the funding and budget will be awarded to another applicant.

6. Selection Criteria

Okayama University awards OU-SPRING to applicants who are highly motivated to learn and conduct research, and they are expected to promote research in the priority fields designated by Okayama University and to play important roles in science, technology, and innovation creation in Japan in the near future. Applicants are comprehensively evaluated in the following areas:

- (1) The ability to set innovative research themes supported by creativity and deep insight
- (2) Exceptional ability to pursue their research
- (3) High communication ability
- (4) How you can contribute to research that falls under the "Okayama University Top Priority Research Fields".

7. OU-SPRING Recipient Obligation

Successful OU-SPRING recipients are obligated to take research ethics education classes specified by Okayama University, concentrate on research activities based on their own research plans, and pursue the following items to form their particular career paths after the acquisition of the degrees: (Details will be announced following selection.)

- (1) Submission of research progress reports for each academic year (September and March, in the designated OU format)
- (2) Periodical interviews with mentors (about 4 times a year in principle)
- (3) Participation in programs related to the improvement of research capability and support for career path (seminars for presentations, transferable skill training, meetings with companies, etc.)
- (4) Report any changes in the information provided in the "Confirmation of Eligibility to Apply" section of the application form.
- (5) Register with "researchmap", a database-type researchers' directory operated by the National Institute of Science and Technology Agency (JST)

8. Notes

- (1) Successful OU-SPRING applicants are required to submit a pledge to concentrate on research activities, etc.
- (2) Successful OU-SPRING applicants do not have an employment relationship with Okayama University; however, research encouragement funding is listed as miscellaneous income under tax law and is considered taxable income. Therefore, successful applicants must file income tax returns.
- (3) Research budget must be used appropriately under the supervision of the university (advisor).
- (4) The OU-SPRING is a government program, and the OU-SPRING is provided on the premise that the research encouragement funding (equivalent to living expenses) and research budget will support "research activities in Japan," as determined by the government system. Therefore, please note that the funding and budget cannot be provided to those who have not been able to come to Japan.
- (5) If you become an OU-SPRING recipient, you will not be eligible for the "Return Exemption System for Outstanding Achievement" of JASSO's Type 1 (interest-free) scholarship.

9. Contact/Address to Send Your Application (OU-SPRING Office)

Kawaguchi/Kanemoto, Research Support Office

Email: ou-fellowship@adm.okayama-u.ac.jp

Phone Number: 086-251-8462