

Application Guidelines

I. Program Background and Objectives

Background

It is necessary for Japanese universities to carry out education and research programs on a par with top-level universities around the world. This will require the creation of a competitive environment among the Japanese national, private and public universities by introducing a principle of competition through third-party assessments. They should compete with each other in education and research. As part of the government's effort to reform the universities in this direction, in FY 2002 Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) inaugurated the "21st Century COE (Centers of Excellence) Program" to support the establishment of world-class education and research centers within Japanese universities with an eye to raising their competitiveness to the highest world level.

The "21st Century COE Program" has worked to advance university reform, foster talented young researchers and elevate the standard of university research while pioneering new academic fields. Now, MEXT has determined that to meet the growing challenges of advancing globalization and info-proliferation a post-"21st COE Program" initiative is needed to foster researchers with an even higher level of international capabilities.

For this purpose, MEXT established the "Global COE Program." This new program is designed to create centers of education and research excellence of the world's highest order, which work to dramatically strengthen the university's function of educating young researchers capable of playing active roles within international settings. Covered will be all scientific fields, including interdisciplinary and combined fields and new disciplines.

Objectives

The Global COE Program provides funding support for establishing education and research centers that perform at the apex of global excellence to elevate the international competitiveness of the Japanese universities. The program strengthens and enhances the education and research functions of graduate schools so as to foster highly creative young researchers who will go on to become world leaders in their respective fields. This it does by allowing them to experience and conduct research of the highest world standard.

II. Program Outline

1. Eligible institutes

Targets of the “Global COE Program” are the below-listed types of institutes at national, public and private universities under MEXT jurisdiction.

- Doctoral departments or programs in university graduate schools
- University-attached research institutes (PhD-level)

When the combination of two or more graduate departments is considered meaningful from the perspective of the university’s strategy, submission of a joint application is desirable.

2. Applicants and application contents

- Only the presidents of universities are eligible to apply for this program.
- Program members must be members of the department or organization in which the COE is to be based. Taking responsibility for the program, they play a main role in its implementation.
- The program leader organizes the functions of program members and takes responsibility for carrying out the overall program.
- The program leader must be a full-time member of the department faculty, whereas program members (excluding the program leader) may be either full- or part-time members of the faculty.
- Program members may not be included in more than one application.
- The president of an applying university is to submit the proposal to the Minister of MEXT describing how the graduate department will be developed into a world-class education/research COE under his/her management.
- The contents of the proposal need not cover the entire range of the department’s education/research activities, but should be focused on those of the proposed COE program.
- In principle, COEs established under this program are to be operated within an individual university. However, if the university’s future concept is clearly defined and, to achieve it, the plan requires cooperation with other institutes (domestic or foreign research institutes, including universities) in operating the COE, then permission may be obtained to do so under the following conditions.

Conditions:

- That it is clearly stipulated which university will be the COE’s core university
- That the program leader belongs to the core university.
- That 70% or more of program members belong to the core university

- That 50% or more of the direct program funding is used by the core university
- That the program members include researchers from the counterpart institutes
- That an agreement for establishing the COE be signed with the counterpart(s).

When the applicant's proposal calls for cooperation with other Japanese universities' graduate departments and includes education of the counterparts' doctoral students, grant money for this purpose may be distributed to each participating university.

3. Funding

- Universities should request the amount required to implement the program over a 5-year period. The amount of funding requested for each fiscal year is to be decided taking into account the entire program budget and the content of each proposal.
- The result of an interim assessment made at the program's 2-year point will be reflected in the amount of funding provided in the remaining years (4th and 5th year).
- 30% of the direct funding will be allocated to cover administrative overhead expenses.

The following items of funding may be requested:

(1) Equipment

Equipment required to carry out the program, including minor installation expenses

(2) Travel

Travel required to carry out the program (e.g., domestic travel, overseas travel, travel for invited foreign researchers)

(3) Wages

Wages and remunerations for assistants, workers and specialists (etc.) needed to carry out the program

(4) Operations

Operating expenses needed to carry out the program (e.g., consumables, commissions and fees, printing, communications, shipping, utilities, clerical expenses, meeting costs, per diems for invited foreign researchers)

When the core university implements the program in cooperation with another institute, the counterpart institute may use up to 50% of the grant to cover the expense of its commissioned activities. Routine operations may also be commissioned to other institutions.

Unrelated expenses (e.g., alcoholic beverages, get-togethers, accident/disaster compensation or tuition aid) to this program are prohibited unless they are deemed essential to its implementation (e.g., used in holding international conferences).

4. Funding period

In principle, programs are funded for a period of five years, but may be terminated as a result of the interim assessment conducted at the 2-year point.

5. Eligible fields, Number of awardees, Funding scale

(1) Eligible fields

As with the “21st Century COE Program”, the following five fields will be covered in FY2008: Medical sciences; mathematics, physics, earth sciences; mechanical, civil engineering, architectural and other fields of engineering; social sciences; interdisciplinary and combined fields, new disciplines.

(2) Relation between application and fields

Each application must be for a COE program in one of these five fields.

(3) Number of awardees

About 10-15 COE proposals will be selected in each field, based on the quality of the applications and contents of the proposed programs.

(4) Funding scale

From 50 million to 500 million yen will be granted for each program per fiscal year. (Applications for less than 50 million yen are also accepted.)

Important points to keep in mind when applying

- The purpose of the program is not to compile research projects, but is to establish international education/research COEs.
- The program targets education/research activities at the doctoral level, and is expected to foster young researchers who can play an important international role in their respective fields.
- The program is expected to improve the research environment for young researchers.
- The program is expected to strengthen financial support for PhD students as stipulated in the “Science and Technology Basic Plan” adopted by the Cabinet.
- The program works to further advance the results achieved by education/research centers established under the “21st Century COE Program”.

FY	Fields	Examples of fields
2007	Life sciences	Biological sciences, agricultural sciences, pharmaceutical sciences, etc. Others (multidisciplinary fields centering on life sciences)
	Chemistry, material sciences	Chemistry, material sciences, metallurgical engineering, process engineering, etc. Others (multidisciplinary fields centering on chemistry or material sciences)
	Information sciences, electrical and electronic sciences	Information sciences, systems, software, materials, devices, telecommunication engineering, etc. Others (multidisciplinary fields centering on information sciences or electrical and electronic sciences)
	Humanities	Philosophy, linguistics, literature, history, human geography, cultural anthropology, psychology, education, art, etc. Others (multidisciplinary fields centering on humanities)
2008	Medical sciences	Medicine, dentistry, nursing, healthcare, etc. Others (multidisciplinary fields centering on medical sciences)
	Mathematics, physics, earth sciences	Mathematics, basic physics, applied physics, astronomy, earth/planet sciences, etc. Others (multidisciplinary fields centering on mathematics, physics or earth sciences)
	Mechanical, civil engineering, architectural and other fields of engineering	Mechanical engineering, civil engineering, architecture, etc. Others (multidisciplinary fields centering on mechanical, civil engineering, architectural or other fields of engineering)
	Social sciences	Law, political science, economics, management, sociology, etc. Others (multidisciplinary fields centering on social sciences)
2007-2011	Interdisciplinary, combined fields, new disciplines	Medical engineering, life sciences, environmental sciences, energy sciences, area studies, etc. Others multidisciplinary fields or new disciplines

Note: The above-listed examples of fields are to give an image of the scope of each field. They are not meant to limit the option of fields or to prevent the combining of fields.

III. How Applications Are Reviewed

Reviews for grant selection are carried out by the “Global COE Program Committee,” which is operated by Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS).

For further information, please refer to the “Review Guidelines”.

In the review process, panel reviews are scheduled to be held in mid-May. Proposals referred to a panel review will be evaluated by foreign referees for the international competitiveness of their proposed activities. Therefore, universities should prepare the relevant parts of their applications in English.

IV. How to Apply

1. Application form

The prescribed application form is to be submitted by the university president to the Minister of MEXT.

2. Application procedure

Applicants must submit their applications during the period of 12-13 February 2008.

3. Others

- Once an application is submitted, it cannot be replaced or revised.
- Universities should maintain copies of their applications.
- If erroneous, false or incomplete statements are found in an application that could affect the review process, the application will be rejected, or the grant withdrawn if found after selection. (In this case, the program member who made the statement will be suspended from participating in the Global COE Program for a specified period. S/he may also be restricted from participating in other competitive grant programs.)
- As selected COE programs will normally run for five years, plans should be carefully devised to cover the entire duration of the program.
- For selected programs, the amount of the grant and instructions on how to apply for its disbursement will be provided separately.

V. Other Points

1. Use of grant money

(1) Implementing and administering the grant program

Each university is obligated to abide by relevant Japanese law as the grant money is allocated from the national budget.

(2) Supervision of grant funds

The university's administrative office is to systematically supervise the use of the grant funds to assure that they are being expended properly in the implementation of the program.

(3) Misuse of grant funds

If infractions are found in the use of the funds, the university may be required to return all or part of the grant, and the program member who committed the infraction will be restricted from participating in the Global COE Program (and may also be restricted from participating in competitive funding programs).

(4) Administration/audit guidelines for publicly funded research

Each applying university is required to submit an implementation status report to MEXT. Applications will not be accepted without this report.

(5) Each university is responsible for carrying out its program in accordance with relevant laws and ordinances.

2. Program assessments

An interim assessment is conducted at the 2-year point of the program and a posterior assessment is conducted after the program is completed.

A program may be terminated as the result of the interim assessment.

The assessment process and criteria are established by the Program Committee.

3. Guidelines for ethics and safety in life science research

Established by laws and guidelines, procedures for conducting and safeguarding research in the life sciences must be strictly observed.

Programs may be terminated if it is found that research is being conducted in violation of such laws and guidelines.

4. Publication

The names of applying universities, the names of their cooperating institutions and the number of their proposals will be released to the public, as will the name of the program leader and a summary of the proposal in the case of selected universities.

In addition, information on selected programs may be provided to and posted on the Cabinet-operated government R&D database via MEXT's electronic "e-Rad" system.

5. Others

- Universities may not apply for a grant under this program for use in another separately funded research program.
- To avoid ineffective overlapping or over-concentration of funds, information contained in part of the application may be provided to other competitive funding systems. (If such overlapping or concentration of funds is found to exist, the program's adoption may be canceled.)
- If in conducting research under the program, fraudulent acts (e.g. forgery, falsification, plagiarism) should occur, the university may be required to refund part or all of the grant money, and the program member who committed the infraction suspended from participating in the Global COE Program for a specific period (and may also be restricted from participating in other competitive funding programs).

VI. CONTACT US and Schedule

Inquiries regarding reviews and assessments should be made to:

University-Industry Cooperation and Research Program Division,

Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS)

8 Ichibancho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-8472, JAPAN

Tel: +81-3-3263-0985, Fax: +81-3-3237-8015

E-mail: globalcoe-jsps@jsps.go.jp

Inquiries regarding general issues should be made to:

University Promotion Division, Higher Education Bureau

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)

3-2-2 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-8959, JAPAN

Tel: +81-3-5253-4111(ext.3312), Fax: +81-3-6734-3387

Schedule

Applications must arrive at JSPS during the period 12-13 February 2008.

The selection results are scheduled to be announced at the end of May.