

2026 Suginome Memorial Program for the Support of Overseas Dispatch of Early-Career Researchers — Ambitious Challenge Program — Application Guidelines

1. Purpose of the Program

At Hokkaido University, in commemoration of the achievements of the late former President Harusada Suginome and with the aim of contributing to the advancement of scholarship and education, the Public Interest Incorporated Foundation Suginome Memorial Foundation made a generous donation of its remaining assets to the Hokkaido University Frontier Foundation upon the dissolution of the Foundation. Inheriting the intentions embodied in this donation—particularly those of the late former Chairperson Hiroshi Suginome, who devoted himself to the administration of the Foundation—the University has resolved to utilize the donated funds to provide support for the overseas dispatch of early-career researchers with the aim of promoting academic research.

This program aims to strengthen the University's research capabilities by supporting opportunities for outstanding early-career researchers of the University to establish joint research partnerships with leading overseas research groups or to actively participate in the international research community, thereby expanding their networks and promoting interdisciplinary research. The program is also open to postdoctoral fellows and graduate students, with the expectation that young researchers who will lead the future will develop research skills that contribute to the resolution of global issues.

2. Application Categories

I. Short-Term Stay Grant: Total duration of travel is 3 weeks or more and less than 6 months.

The grant is awarded to strengthen an international cooperative relationship with, make joint research proposals to, or engage in collaborative research activities that can be conducted in a relatively short period of time with a leading research group at an overseas university or research institution with which the relationship has already been established or is being established.

II. Long-Term Stay Grant: Total duration of travel is 6 months or more and less than 2 years.

The grant is awarded primarily to support the research activities over a relatively long-term necessary to co-author a high-impact paper with a leading research group at an overseas university or research institution with which a relationship has already been established.

3. Scope of the Program

I. Short-Term Stay Grant: Awards up to 1,500,000 yen per project

(Projected number of awards: 6)

II. Long-Term Stay Grant: Awards up to 5,000,000 yen per project

(Projected number of awards: 2)

※We will strongly promote collaboration with highly ranked research universities, including our Strategic International Partnerships (Seoul National University, the University of Melbourne, and the University of Massachusetts Amherst).

4. Application Requirements (applicable to both categories)

1) Eligibility

HU faculty members (including specially appointed academic staff), postdoctoral fellows, and students in the latter period of doctoral programs who are within 15 years of obtaining their doctoral degree as of March 31, 2027.

For researchers who are 16 or more years past the conferral of their doctoral degree and have interrupted their research careers in the past due to life events such as childbirth, child care, or elderly care, the period of interruption will be taken into consideration in the selection process.

2) Criteria for Eligible Travel

• The applicant in section (1) above must travel abroad during FY2026 and conduct research activities at the host university or research institution under the approval of their affiliated department or institute, and the host organization.

However, when the applicant is a postdoctoral fellow or a graduate student, they must obtain a recommendation from the faculty member who directs the laboratory they belong to or their academic supervisor.

3) Conditions for Application

• The host research group must have an author of a top 10% paper (or equivalent achievement). Or the applicant has a top 10% paper (or equivalent achievement) of their own and is reasonably expected to write a high-impact paper in the joint research project with the host organization.

Note: See below for information on how to search for the top 10% papers:

URA Station "2022 How to Search for Top 10% Papers" (in Japanese)

<https://u4u.oeic.hokudai.ac.jp/action/tools/>

• The applicant must possess a high level of language skill to conduct research smoothly with the research group at the host organization.

4) Initiatives to undertake during or after the period of stay(Choose either①,②,or both)

①Initiatives to contribute to an increase of top 10% paper or international co-authored paper

②Application to the Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (KAKENHI),Adopting Sustainable Partnerships for Innovative Research Ecosystem(JST),and others

5. Approved Expenses

I. Short-Term Stay Grant

- Expenses necessary for the travel (travel, accommodation, and other necessary expenses during the stay)
- Expenses incurred by the applicant's department or institute for the applicant's travel (fees for part-time lecturers who substitute during the travel, TA, TF and RA employment expenses, expenses necessary for the continuation of experiments, etc.)
- A travel whose primary purpose is deemed to be participating in an international conference will not be approved.

II. Long-Term Stay Grant

- Expenses necessary for the travel (travel, accommodation, preparation, other necessary expenses during the stay, research expenses, and fees for English editing and proofreading services, etc.)
- Expenses incurred by the applicant's department or institute for the applicant's travel (fees for part-time lecturers who substitute during the travel, TA, TF and RA employment expenses, expenses necessary for the continuation of experiments, etc.)

6. Application Schedule

Application Period: Thursday, April 30 to Tuesday, June 30, 2026

Selection Period: Mid July to Late July 2026

Announcement of Award: Early August 2026

7. How to Apply and What to Submit

Each department or institute, etc. shall submit the "Application Form: Form 1-1" and "Itemized Statement of Estimated Expenses: Form 1-2" prepared by the applicant. Applicants must update their information on researchmap by the time of application submission, as their research achievements will be verified on the website. Graduate students or other persons who are not registered with researchmap must submit their research achievements (papers, presentations, books, etc.; free format) along with other documents required.

Where to submit: Research Human Resources Development Unit,
Research Promotion and Planning Division,
Research Promotion Department

E-mail: jinzajimu@synfoster.hokudai.ac.jp

Deadline: 17:00, Tuesday, June 30, 2026*

*Late submissions will not be accepted.

8. Selection Criteria

The Executive Office for Research Strategy will conduct a comprehensive review using the following criteria and select the successful applicants:

- 1) The purpose of the travel and the research objectives are concrete and specific and in line with the purpose of this program.
- 2) It is expected that the proposed research outlook demonstrates a high degree of feasibility and, as a result, will lead in the future to the publication of high-impact scholarly papers and the advancement of international joint research.
- 3) It is expected that the applicant has published high-impact papers and that further advancement will be achieved through joint research project with the host organization.
- 4) The use and cost estimation of the requested expenses are valid and reasonable.

9. Reminders

- 1) Researchers of all research fields are eligible to apply.
- 2) Please provide specific details about the research activities at the host organization. We strongly encourage to elaborate if the expected results will strengthen the University's research capabilities.
- 3) Grant recipients are requested to submit a report at the end of each fiscal year using the prescribed form and to post their travel report on the University's website. For those who receive a Long-Term Stay Grant, a report session will be held after their return to Japan, hosted by the Executive Director in charge of research.
- 4) A follow-up survey will be conducted after a certain period following their return.
- 5) The applicant is responsible for obtaining a visa, completing procedures necessary for travel, and communicating with the host organization.
- 6) When applications from excellent young researchers (graduate students in particular) are received, we ask that their affiliated departments or institutes give positive consideration to provide them opportunities to develop and contribute to their field.
- 7) When publishing research outcomes obtained through this program, please include an acknowledgment by referring to the example below.

Example:

This work was supported by the Sugino-me Memorial Program for the Support of Overseas Dispatch of Early- Career Researchers, and the authors gratefully acknowledge this support.