

**Application Guidelines for RARA Student Fellow  
Ritsumeikan Advanced Research Academy (RARA)**

These are the application guidelines for the abovementioned internal program based on the “Support for Pioneering Research Initiated by the Next Generation (SPRING)” and the “Broadening Opportunities for Outstanding young researchers and doctoral students in Strategic areas: Next Generation AI Human Resources Development Program (Support for Doctoral Students) (BOOST),” both of which are openly solicited by the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST). The University is now accepting applications in order to enable doctoral students to start their research activities promptly after the decision of the adoption.

The implementation of the program is premised on the University’s being selected for the said JST programs. Please note that the number of applicants and the content of the program may be changed, or the program may not be implemented at all, depending on the status of adoption.

**(1) Objectives**

One of the pillars of Ritsumeikan University’s mid-term plan for 2030 (“R2030 Academy Vision: Ritsumeikan University Challenge Design”) is to “foster innovative human resources capable of creating social symbiotic value.” As a concrete measure, the Ritsumeikan Advanced Research Academy (hereinafter “RARA”) was established to fundamentally enhance the research environment according to the career paths of researchers, from early-career researchers including graduate students to core researchers who lead the University.

Based on this RARA program, the University shall promote the “RARA Student Fellowship Program” (RARA x SPRING) to foster “T-type doctoral impact makers” who, as doctoral students, can not only deepen their own specialized research fields but also demonstrate social impact through collaboration with other researchers and other professionals in different fields. In addition to RARA x SPRING, we shall also promote the “RARA Student Fellowship Program in the Field of Next-generation AI” (RARA x BOOST) to foster doctoral students in the field of next-generation AI who are capable of resolving social issues by making maximum use of next-generation AI technologies.

In AY2024, we will again select and recognize particularly outstanding doctoral students as “RARA Student Fellow.” Through these programs, we aim to develop them into doctoral candidates who can take a leadership role in resolving social issues by co-creating with others and making maximum use of comprehensive knowledge.

**Ritsumeikan Advanced Research Academy (RARA)**

The RARA is a group of core researchers (Academy) who are expected to take a leadership role in

creating a leading and advanced research center at the University. The researchers gathering at the RARA will become the nucleus of the University and involve other researchers in the promotion of advanced research.

The RARA consists mainly of “RARA Fellows” who are core researchers leading advanced research at the University, “RARA Associate Fellows” who are building up their track record to become core researchers, and “RARA Student Fellows” who are expected to become active researchers of the next generation.

For more information, please visit <https://rara.ritsumei.ac.jp/>

## **(2) Program content**

This program supports “RARA Student Fellows” in the following three main frameworks, aiming to develop “T-type doctoral impact makers” and “next-generation AI researchers.” In principle, the program will be conducted in Japanese.

- (i) At the “RARA Colloquium,” an opportunity for research exchange, we will hold lectures by top researchers such as RARA Fellows and promote collaboration among RARA Student Fellows who are affiliated to various Graduate Schools to hone their ability to view their own research fields comparatively and objectively from multiple perspectives.
- (ii) At the “RARA Commons,” an opportunity for presenting research achievements, we will promote outreach activities to the pupils and students of the Academy (one elementary school, four junior high schools, four high schools, 16 Colleges and 21 Graduate Schools, and 400,000 alumni (graduates)) to develop RARA Student Fellows’ ability to convey the significance and enjoyment of their own research to a diverse, intergenerational audience.
- (iii) We will develop and expand problem-resolving and cross-disciplinary research and education programs such as PBL, Overseas Immersion Program, internships, etc., which are organized by utilizing Research Organizations within the University, overseas offices, and a diverse collaborative network of industry, academia, and government. Through these programs, we will evaluate and verify the experience and abilities acquired by RARA Student Fellows.

In addition to the above, the RARA x BOOST will form a RARA Support Unit for the development of innovative industrial human resources of the next-generation AI (including researchers) and provide support programs from the following three perspectives:

- (i) Fostering next-generation AI researchers who can play an active role globally

Support will be provided to RARA Student Fellows so that they can conduct short-term study abroad or training at other overseas research institutions by making use of the international research exchange network of RARA Fellows and RARA Associate Fellows.

- (ii) Fostering next-generation AI researchers with experience participating in interdisciplinary fields and

interdisciplinary research programs

Through connections with the 11 interdisciplinary research projects of the Ritsumeikan Global Innovation Research Organization (R-GIRO), ties with laboratories specializing in the field of next-generation AI will be strengthened.

(iii) Fostering next-generation AI researchers who aim to start up and commercialize their own businesses

Through collaboration with the Ritsumeikan Impact-Makers InterX (cross) (RIMIX), the utilization of the achievements of AI research, etc. will be promoted.

The RARA Office (Career Path Support Center), which serves as the program’s promotion secretariat, assigns coordinators to RARA Student Fellows, who provide appropriate guidance and advice so that the RARA Student Fellows can notice their own personal growth.

In addition, doctoral students adopted as RARA Student Fellow will receive a research grant and a research activity support grant (equivalent to living expenses).

**(3) Application details**

Name of program	RARA Student Fellow
Number of positions to be made available	<p>About 60 positions (D1/ about 40, D2/ about 10, D3/about 10) will be made available.*1</p> <p>*1 Including 1-3 positions*2 to be recruited as RARA x BOOST.</p> <p>*2 Applicants for the RARA x BOOST may be adopted for the RARA x SPRING after screening, or vice versa.</p> <p>*The appointment date as RARA Student Fellow may be deferred until October 1 in some cases.</p>
Appointment period	<p>The support will be provided from April 2024 until the end of the standard period of degree completion.</p> <p>(E.g.) For D1 students in AY2024: April 1, 2024-March 31, 2027</p>
Eligibility	<p>One of the following conditions must be met.</p> <p>However, Japanese Government (Monbukagakusho: MEXT) Scholarship recipients, Foreign Government Scholarship recipients, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) Research Fellow, recipients of scholarships that do not permit dual reception, and those who are recognized as earning a stable income at a level sufficient to cover living expenses (based on the annual income of 2.4 million yen) shall be excluded. If you have any questions about the ineligible conditions, please contact the RARA Office in advance.</p> <p>(For D1 applicants)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Those who have passed the entrance examination for the doctoral course for admission in AY2024</li> <li>- Those enrolled in a Graduate School in September 2023 which is eligible for</li> </ul>

	<p>the program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Those who will be in the third year (or equivalent) of an integrated doctoral course of the University in the spring semester of AY2024</li> <li>*Those who have earned credits of Preliminary Project Exercise III as at the time of application. For details, please contact the Administrative Office, Inter-Faculty Graduate Schools at Kinugasa Campus.</li> <li>- Those who will be in the first year of a four-year doctoral course of the University in AY2024</li> </ul> <p>(For D2 and D3 applicants)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Those who will be in the second and third year in the spring semester of 2024</li> <li>- Those who will be in the fourth year (or equivalent) of an integrated doctoral course of the University in 2024</li> <li>*Those who earned credits of Preliminary Project Exercise III in AY2022. For details, please contact the Administrative Office, Inter-Faculty Graduate Schools at Kinugasa Campus.</li> <li>- Those who will be in the second year or above of a four-year doctoral course of the University in AY2024</li> </ul> <p>*In the event that a student adopted as RARA Student Fellow is unable to satisfy the requirements above as of April 1, 2024, however, his/her RARA Student Fellow status shall be revoked.</p>
Obligations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Engage in research activities with awareness and responsibility as RARA Student Fellow.</li> <li>(ii) Participate in and make presentation at programs, seminars, etc. organized or designated by the Division of Research, including RARA Colloquium and RARA Commons.</li> <li>(iii) Maintain high ethical standards in accordance with the Ritsumeikan University Research Ethics Guidelines, engage in research activities, and refrain from committing misconduct.</li> <li>(iv) Properly execute research expenses in accordance with the “Ritsumeikan University Regulations on the Management of Public Research Funds.”</li> <li>(v) Have meeting with Coordinators.</li> <li>(vi) Undergo an extension review (to be conducted by the Division of Research) at the end of the academic year.</li> <li>(vii) Apply for a JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowship.</li> <li>(viii) Disseminate your research achievements on the Ri-search and through other means.</li> <li>(ix) Complete the course within the standard period of degree completion.</li> </ul>

Support and research funds*1	<p>[RARA x SPRING]</p> <p>(i) Research activity support grant: 185,000 yen per month (2,220,000 yen per year) (taxable)*2</p> <p>(ii) Research grant: 340,000 yen per year (maximum amount)*3</p> <p>[RARA x BOOST]</p> <p>(i) Research activity support grant: 185,000 yen per month (2,220,000 yen per year) (taxable)*2</p> <p>(ii) Research grant: 1,680,000 yen per year (maximum amount)*3</p>
Other	Be a role model for other students and be proactively involved in providing learning and research support to pupils and students of the Academy.

\*1 The support period for those admitted in September will be until the expiration of the standard period of degree completion (September).

The support period for those adopted in October will be until the expiration of the standard period of degree completion for the relevant students. The maximum annual amount of the research activity support grant and research grant for the first year of the program is up to 1,110,000 yen and 170,000 yen (840,000 yen for RARA x BOOST), respectively.

If the applicant is unable to enter Japan due to restrictions on entry into Japan imposed by the Japanese government, etc., the grants cannot be provided.

\*2 The research activity support grant shall be provided every other month in odd-numbered months (i.e. May, July, September, November, January, and March).

\*3 Reimbursement of actual expenses shall be made with receipts, invoices, etc.

#### **(4) Application and screening schedule**

Briefing sessions : March 6 (Wed.), 7 (Thu.), and 13 (Wed.), 2024 (\*) Online

Application period: Between Tuesday, March 5 and 12:00 noon on Monday, March 18, 2024

Announcement of acceptance or rejection: Early April 2024 (tentative) \*Notification to the applicant (by e-mail)

#### **(5) Application documents**

(i) Application Form (Form 1)

*\*In addition, students of Ritsumeikan University are required to submit their research achievements on the “Ri-SEARCH (Ritsumeikan University Search Engine of Academic Record and Career History of Young Researchers)” (<https://gyoseki-web.ritsumei.ac.jp/ritgsap/P300>), and those from other universities are required to submit a list of their research achievements (in free format).*

(ii) Letter of Recommendation from your supervisor (Form 2)

*\*Ask the prospective supervisor for your doctoral course (or equivalent) to provide a Letter of Recommendation.*

(iii) Self-promotion video (any format)

Please create a video of no more than one minute in length that includes the following two points

- What you hope to do as a member of the RARA Academy after you become a RARA Student Fellow

(enthusiasm)

- Your career path (future vision)

[Points to note]

- Ensure that your face is clearly visible while presenting the material.

- Recording methods are optional; please devise a method most suited to you such as recording via Zoom or recording a slide show in PowerPoint.

- The total data size, including (i) Application Form and (ii) Letter of Recommendation from your supervisor, shall be no more than 100MB.

- Video format must be mp4.

\*mov format cannot be accepted since it may not be playable.

\*Please refer to the “Application Checklist” for details and make sure that all details are correct.

\*Application documents and other submitted materials will be used for screening purposes only.  
Submitted materials will not be returned.

\*Personal information obtained from application documents will be used for screening purposes only.

## **(6) Submission method/deadline**

(1) Submission method (In order to submit, you must first create an account.)

(i) Step 1

Please create an account at the following URL.

\*If you already have an account through the enrollment procedures, etc., please proceed directly to Step 2 below.

URL:

<https://rw.ritsumei.ac.jp/survey/guest/SVA4FD0.html?key=LNG20230323150639761410606>

(ii) Step 2

With your valid account, please access the URL above to click the “入力はこちら(Select here to apply)” button and you will be redirected to the submission page for your application.

Please fill out the form and upload your application data [(1) Application Form (in PDF), (2) Letter of Recommendation from your supervisor (in PDF) and (3) Self-promotion Video] to the designated attachment box to submit.

(2) Submission deadline

12:00 noon on Monday, March 18, 2024 (To be strictly observed)

\*Applications submitted after the deadline will not be accepted for any reason.

\*The date and time of application will be determined based on the log of the time when the application is completed on the application form. Even if there is a delay in application due to a device malfunction, etc., the decision will be based solely on the application log, so please submit your application well in advance of the deadline above.

## **(7) Screening**

(1) Procedures

The Screening Committee will be established within the University to review and select the fellows. The committee will be chaired by the Program Supervisor of the RARA Student Fellowship Program and vice-chaired by the Executive Director of the Graduate Student Career Path Support Center, and will be composed of the Deans of the Division of Research and the Division of Academic Affairs as well as internal and external experts appointed by the Chairperson. The committee will conduct a documentary screening based on the evaluation criteria. The acceptance will be determined based on the results of the review by the Screening Committee.

(2) Evaluation criteria

- (i) Reasons and purposes of the application for RARA Student Fellow (enthusiasm)
- (ii) The relevant student's own ability to conduct research based on the research activities to date.
- (iii) Appropriateness and future growth potential of the research plan, and a prospect of obtaining a degree within the standard period of degree completion
- (iv) The relevant student's future goals and their conformance with the objectives of the program

**(8) Others**

Those who are currently applying for the "JSPS Research Fellowship for Young Scientists" are also eligible to apply, but must choose "JSPS Research Fellowship for Young Scientists" if they are selected for the both programs. (You must decline RARA Student Fellow status.)

[Contact]

Attn: PIC of RARA Student Fellow at the RARA Office

Email: [rara@st.ritsumei.ac.jp](mailto:rara@st.ritsumei.ac.jp)

Tel: 075-813-8560

RARA Student Fellowship Program (RARA x SPRING)  
RARA Student Fellowship Next Generation AI Field Program (RARA x BOOST)  
FAQ

**1. Eligibility**

Q1-1. Even though I am not being supervised by a RARA Fellow, can I still apply for this program?

A1-1. Yes, you can apply. We accept applications from a wide range of doctoral students, including those who are not to be supervised by RARA Fellows.

Q1-2. Do I need to obtain a recommendation from my supervisor to apply?

A1-2. Yes, you do. Doctoral students need to obtain a recommendation from their supervisor. In this program, RARA Student Fellows are aimed to improve individual research competences and to develop into a PhD holder equipped with the qualities and abilities to play an active role in the international community. Accordingly, RARA Student Fellows are obligated to participate in programs embedded in the RARA Colloquium and conduct seminars at affiliated schools, etc. as part of the dissemination of research achievements. As the doctoral students are required to fulfill their responsibilities as RARA Student Fellows while conducting their own research activities, their supervisors are requested to give them a recommendation and approval for their participation in this program in advance. However, if you are unable to procure a Letter of Recommendation from your supervisor, please consult with the RARA Office.

Q1-3. [For Supervisors] Can I recommend multiple students whom I supervise?

A1-3. Yes, you can. There is no limit on the number of students who can be recommended by a supervisor.

Q1-4. The eligibility states that “those who are already receiving support from another program or who are recognized as earning a stable income at a level sufficient to cover living expenses from the University, a private enterprise, etc. are excluded.” Which specific programs are regarded as such?

A1-4. From the viewpoint of providing fair support to as many doctoral students as possible, those who are receiving support from the programs listed in the examples are not eligible for this program. If you are not sure whether or not the support you are receiving affects your eligibility for this program, please contact the RARA Office before applying.

Q1-5. I am currently working as a research assistant (RA). Can I still apply for this program?

A1-5. You can apply for this program even if you are working as a research assistant (RA). Please confirm in advance, however, that you are not receiving support from any of the programs listed in the



“Eligibility” section.

Q1-6. Are those who are to enroll at the University in September 2024 eligible to apply for this program?

A1-6. Those enrolling in September 2024 are not eligible for this call.

Q1-7. Is it possible for international students who are receiving tuition fee reduction or exemption under the “Ritsumeikan University Regulations on the Tuition Fee Reduction and Exemption for International Students” to apply?

A1-7. Yes, it is possible to apply.

Q1-8. Is it possible to apply if I am on a leave of absence for AY2023 but plan to come back as a D1 student in April 2024, or if I am not registered for AY2023 but plan to enroll as a D1 student afresh in April 2024?

A1-8. For the former, you are eligible in the case that you were on a leave of absence for the entirety of the application periods for AY2023 (from September 20 to October 4, 2022 and from January 23 to February 27, 2023). As for the latter, you are eligible.

## **2. Application documents and submission**

Q2-1. If I am researching in the field of AI, do I have to apply for RARA x BOOST instead of RARA x SPRING?

A2-1. Students who are researching in the field of AI can also apply for RARA x SPRING. Please check the support details of each program and select the program you wish to apply for.

Q2-2. What level of expertise in AI is required for the “doctoral students in the field of next-generation AI” that RARA x BOOST aims to foster?

A2-2. RARA Student Fellows supported by RARA x BOOST are expected to have the following level of expertise.

[Examples]

- Researchers in the field of next-generation AI who will contribute to the creation of innovation and the enhancement of industrial competitiveness in Japan
- AI engineers and data scientists who have the skills to carry out their own research.
- Researchers who are able to catch up with rapidly evolving AI technologies and introduce the most appropriate AI to their own research.
- Researchers who are able to connect their own research to the development of AI and its application to other research, etc.

Q2-3. The application (Form 1) asks that the research plan be described from the perspective of resolving a social issue, but is there a specific social issue or research field set?

A2-3. We do not limit the research plan to specific social issues or research fields, such as environmental or population issues. In addition to issues that are widely discussed in society, for example, in the research fields of literature and history, we expect research plans that will lead to the solution of various social issues according to the various research themes of RARA Student Fellows, such as the possibility that research results will be recognized by people as social issues in the future and could be a solution to such issues.

Q2-4. May I submit a self-promotional video longer than one minute because I have so much enthusiasm for the RARA Student Fellowship Program and so many things I want to work on after being adopted that I cannot make a self-promotional video shorter than one minute?

A2-4. Please create and submit a self-promotional video of no more than one minute in length as specified.

### **3. After adoption**

Q3-1. If a RARA Student Fellow takes a leave of absence, how will the research activity support grant and research grant be handled?

A3-1. When a RARA Student Fellow takes a leave of absence, the research activity support grant, etc. will be suspended for the semester in which the leave of absence occurs. The period of suspension will not be included in the stipend period, but if the total period of leave of absence exceeds one year, the period exceeding one year will be included in the stipend period. In addition, the research grant cannot be executed during the period of leave of absence.

Q3-2. What kind of cooperation would be required as an adoptee for the Support for Pioneering Research Initiated by the Next Generation (SPRING) of the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST)?

A3-2. Graduate students who have been adopted as RARA Student Fellow are required to cooperate with the following activities by JST. The details will be notified to the successful applicants.

(i) Participation in doctoral student networking events

This is a cross-university exchange event for doctoral students participating in the SPRING, where they can interact with fellow students from other universities to promote mutual inspiration and networking among them.

(ii) Student monitoring survey

JST will directly follow up with the supported students so that they can ensure access to them, directly receive their opinions, etc., and utilize the results straight away in the evaluation of each doctoral student

support project.

(iii) Evaluation and follow-up of fostering effects of the program

We will conduct follow-up surveys on the subsequent careers of the graduates of this program for more than 10 years and provide the information to JST.

#### **4. Other**

Q4-1. Is there a separate call for the NEXT Student Fellowship Program?

A4-1. No. The NEXT Student Fellowship Program has now been integrated into this program, so there are no calls for “NEXT Student Fellows” any longer.