

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

I. 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 has been promoting 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 the RARA x SPRING, we have also been implementing 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 AY2026, we will again select and adopt 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/>

II. Program content

This program supports “RARA Student Fellows” through 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 diverse collaborative networks of industry, academia, and government. Through these programs, we will evaluate and verify the experience and abilities nurtured 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 of participating in interdisciplinary fields and interdisciplinary research programs

Through connections with Ritsumeikan Global Innovation Research Organization (R-GIRO) research projects, 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 (Graduate Student 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).

III. Application details

Name of program	RARA Student Fellow
Number of positions to be made available	<p>RARA x SPRING - Approx. 38 students in D1 - 14 students in D3</p> <p>RARA x BOOST - 2 students in D1</p> <p>[Supplementary information]</p> <p>1) As a result of the screening process, those who applied for the RARA x BOOST may be adopted for the RARA x SPRING, or vice versa.</p> <p>2) In the event that a vacancy occurs among the adoptees, the secretariat will be in touch with the relevant alternate adoptees individually to confirm their intention to fill the vacancy.</p> <p>3) Following the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology’s review of the SPRING program (“Future Direction of Science and Technology Human Resources Policy (Interim Summary),” July 30, 2025, Science and Technology/Academic Council Human Resources Committee), the support to be provided to international students adopted for the RARA×SPRING will be as follows. Note that there will be no changes to the RARA×BOOST. *See FAQ on page 11.</p> <p>(i) For AY2026: Research activity support grants will be provided, and research grants will be allocated (same as the existing program)</p> <p>(ii) From AY2027 onwards: <u>Research activity support grants will not be provided</u>, but research grants will be allocated (new program)</p>
Appointment period	<p>The support will be provided from April 2026 until the end of the standard period of degree completion.</p> <p>(E.g.) For D1 students in AY2026: From April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2029</p>
Eligibility	<p>One of the conditions below shall be met.</p> <p>Please note, however, that Japanese Government (Monbukagakusho: MEXT) Scholarship recipients, Foreign Government Scholarship recipients, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) Research Fellows, 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</p>

	<p>about the ineligible conditions, please contact the RARA Office in advance.</p> <p>[For D1 students] *D3 students should refer to FAQ on page 8.</p> <p>(i) Those who have passed the April entrance examination for AY2026 doctoral courses</p> <p>(ii) Those who enrolled in the first year of the doctoral course in September 2025</p> <p>(iii) Those who will be in the third-year equivalent of the integrated doctoral program in the spring semester of AY2026</p> <p>*Those who are taking the Preliminary Project Exercise III at the time of application (for those enrolled in April), or those who have earned credits for the Preliminary Project Exercise III at the time of application (for those enrolled in September). For details, please contact the Administrative Office, Inter-Faculty Graduate Schools at Kinugasa Campus (in charge of the Graduate School of Core Ethics and Frontier Sciences).</p> <p>(iv) Those who will be enrolled in the first year of four-year doctoral courses in AY2026.</p> <p>*Applications can be made without waiting for the date of the announcement of acceptance for the entrance examination (as described in “Application Period” in “IV. Application and screening schedule”). Having said that, only those who have passed the relevant examination will be considered for adoption.</p> <p>*In the event that a student adopted as RARA Student Fellow is unable to satisfy the requirements above as of April 1, 2026, however, his/her RARA Student Fellow status shall be revoked.</p>
Obligations	<p>(i) Engage in research activities with awareness and responsibility as RARA Student Fellow.</p> <p>(ii) Participate in and make presentation at programs, seminars, etc. organized or designated by the Division of Research, including RARA Colloquium and RARA Commons.</p> <p>(iii) Maintain high ethical standards in accordance with the Ritsumeikan University Research Ethics Guidelines, engage in research activities, and refrain from committing misconduct.</p> <p>(iv) Properly execute research expenses in accordance with the “Ritsumeikan University Regulations on the Management of Public Research Funds.”</p> <p>(v) Have meetings with Coordinators.</p> <p>(vi) Undergo an extension review (to be conducted by the Division of Research) at the end of the academic year.</p> <p>(vii) Apply for a JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowship, foundation grants, and others.</p> <p>(viii) Disseminate your research achievements on the Ri-SEARCH and through other means.</p> <p>(ix) Complete the course within the standard period of degree completion.</p>

Support and research funds*1, 4	<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: 200,000 yen per month (2,400,000 yen per year) (taxable)*2</p> <p>(ii) Research grant: 1,500,000 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).

For AYs with a half-year grant period, the maximum annual amount of the research activity support grant and research grant shall be up to 1,110,000 yen and 170,000 yen (1,200,000 yen and 750,000 yen for RARA x BOOST), respectively.

*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 Payment shall be made in accordance with internal regulations.

*4 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.

IV. Application and screening schedule

Program	RARA x SPRING, RARA x BOOST
Online Briefing Sessions	At 14:00 on Friday, January 30, 2026, and at 10:30 on Tuesday, February 3, 2026 *Each session takes about 30 minutes.
Application Period	Between Monday, February 2 and 13:00 on Friday, February 27, 2026
Announcement of Adoption/Rejection	Thursday, March 19, 2026

Announcement of adoption/rejection will be notified to the applicant by email.

V. Application documents

(i) Application Form for the AY2026 RARA Student Fellow (Form 1)

*In addition, current students of Ritsumeikan University are required to submit their research achievements output from the [“Ri-SEARCH \(Ritsumeikan University Search Engine of Academic Record and Career History of Young Researchers\)”](#)

*Current students of the College of Pharmaceutical Sciences (sixth-year students and above) and those other than students enrolled in the master’s program at the University are required to submit a list of their research achievements (in free format).

(ii) Letter of Recommendation from your supervisor for the AY2026 RARA Student Fellow (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 two minutes that includes the following two points.

- What you hope to achieve as a member of the RARA 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 while being aware of the file size.

*The video should be no larger than 30 MB in principle, and the total data size, together with other application documents (Application Form, Letter of Recommendation from your supervisor, etc.), should be no larger than 100 MB.

*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 the application documents, etc. will be used for screening purposes only.

VI. Submission method/deadline

(1) Submission method

(i) Step 1

Please create an account at the following URL.

<https://rw.ritsumei.ac.jp/survey/guest/SVA4FD0.html?key=LNG20240724092552934369029>

(ii) Step 2

1) 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 screen for your application documents.

2) Please fill in the required information on the application screen, upload the application documents [(1) Application Form (to be saved as a single PDF file combined with the research achievements document), (2) Self-promotion video, and (3) Letter of Recommendation from your supervisor (to be saved as PDF) to the designated attachment boxes, and click “申請内容確認へ進む(Proceed to application verification).” Click “申請内容提出(Submit application)” on the next screen to complete the application.

(2) Submission deadline

As prescribed in “IV. Application and screening schedule.”

***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 the application due to a device malfunction on the applicant's side, Internet environment problems, etc., the decision will be based solely on the application log; so, please submit your application well in advance of the deadline above.

VII. 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 adoption/rejection will be determined based on the screening results by the Screening Committee.

(2) Evaluation criteria

- (i) Reasons and purposes of the application for RARA Student Fellow (enthusiasm)
- (ii) The relevant student's ability to conduct research based on the research activities to date
- (iii) Appropriateness and future growth potential of the research plan, and the 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

VIII. Other

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 both programs (i.e. you must decline the RARA Student Fellow status).

[Contact]

Attn: PIC of RARA Student Fellow at the RARA Office

Email: 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. What are the eligibility requirements for applying to the position for a D3 student?

A1-3. Eligibility requirements for the position for D3 students are as follows:

- (i) Those who enrolled in the first year of the doctoral program in April 2024
 - (ii) Those who enrolled in the first year of the doctoral program in September 2023
 - (iii) Those expected to be enrolled in the fifth-year equivalent of the integrated doctoral program in AY2026
 - (iv) Those expected to be enrolled in the third year of the four-year doctoral program in AY2026
- *There is no recruitment for the fourth year of the four-year doctoral program.
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Q1-4. [For Supervisors] Can I recommend multiple students whom I supervise?

A1-4. Yes, you can. There is no limit on the number of students who can be recommended by a supervisor.

Q1-5. 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?

A1-5. 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.

Q1-6. I am currently working as a research assistant (RA). Can I still apply for this program?

A1-6. 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.

Q1-7. Are those who are to enroll at the University in September 2026 eligible to apply for this program?

A1-7. Those enrolling in September 2026 are not eligible for the calls this time round.

Q1-8. 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?

A1-8. Yes, it is possible to apply.

Q1-9. Is it possible to apply if (i) I am currently on a leave of absence for AY2025 but plan to come back as a D1 student in April 2026, or (ii) I am not registered for AY2025 but plan to enroll as a D1 student afresh in April 2026?

A1-9. For the former, you are eligible in the case that you were on a leave of absence for the entirety of the application period for AY2025. Those applicable should contact the RARA Office before applying. 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 the RARA x BOOST instead of the RARA x SPRING?

A2-1. Those who are researching in the field of AI can also apply for the 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 the RARA x BOOST aims to foster?

A2-2. RARA Student Fellows supported by the 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.
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Q2-3. The Application Form (Form 1) asks that the research plan be described from the perspective of resolving social issues, but is there any 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 two minutes because I have so much enthusiasm for the RARA Student Fellowship Program and so many things I would like to work on after being adopted that I cannot make a self-promotional video shorter than two minutes?

A2-4. Please make the effort to create and submit a self-promotional video of no more than two minutes 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. Those 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
- (ii) Student monitoring survey
- (iii) Evaluation and follow-up of the fostering effects of the program

4. SPRING program from AY2027 onwards

Q4-1. What will be the handling of research activity support grants for international students from AY2027 onwards?

A4-1. Following the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology’s review of the SPRING program (“Future Direction of Science and Technology Human Resources Policy (Interim Summary),” July 30, 2025, Science and Technology/Academic Council Human Resources Committee), the support to be provided to international students adopted for the RARA×SPRING will be as follows. Note that there will be no changes to the RARA×BOOST.

- (i) For AY2026: Research activity support grants will be provided, and research grants will be allocated (same as the existing program)
- (ii) From AY2027 onwards: Research activity support grants will not be provided, but research grants will be allocated (new program)

Year of study	Nationality	Program	Research activity support grant		
			AY2026	AY2027	AY2028
New D1	Japanese	SPRING	✓	✓	✓
		BOOST	✓	✓	✓
	International	SPRING	✓	x	x
		BOOST	✓	✓	✓
New D3	Japanese	SPRING	✓	-	-
	International	SPRING	✓	-	-