

INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS ON THE STUDENT EXCHANGE AT GRADUATE SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND STUDIES ON PUBLIC AFFAIRS

For 2026 Academic Year

This brochure contains information and instructions that graduate students in sister universities of Chiba University should know if they wish to apply for the student exchange at the Graduate School of Humanities and Studies on Public Affairs (abbreviated as GSHSPA), Chiba University. Here, sister universities means those that have effective agreements for student exchange with Chiba University.

I. An Introduction of Graduate Student Exchange

1. What is an Exchange Student?

An exchange student (in a broad sense) is a student who is registered as a full-time student in the sister university to which he/she belongs but studies at Chiba University for a non-degree purpose.

Chiba University offers two kinds of exchange student status at the graduate level, an exchange research student and an exchange student (in a specific sense). An exchange research student engages in his/her research under a supervision of a professor at Chiba University. An exchange student (in a specific sense) takes classes in a graduate program at Chiba University for credits. The credits obtained can be transferred to the graduate program at his/her home university, according to the agreement for student exchange between Chiba University and its sister university.

Please note that an applicant cannot change his/her exchange student status after the application in any case.

2. Exemption

By the agreement for student exchange, all exchange students are exempt from paying the application fee, the enrollment fee, and the tuition.

3. Eligibility

To be eligible for graduate student exchange, students must be enrolled in a graduate school master's program at a university that has a student exchange agreement with Chiba University or the Graduate School of Humanities and Studies on Public Affairs. It is also required that each applicant must be formally recommended to GSHSPA by the graduate school at his/her home university to which he/she belongs.

After completing the study abroad period at Chiba University, return to your home university to continue your studies. It is not possible to graduate or obtain a degree from the university in your home country while you are enrolled (studying abroad) at Chiba University.

4. Period of Study

You can choose one of the following for the period of study abroad.

- 1 semester (6 months from October 1, 2026 to March 31, 2027)
- 2 semesters (11 months from October 1, 2026 to August 31, 2027)

All exchange students enter to GSHSPA in October, in each academic year.

5. Proficiency in Languages

Chiba University requires for all exchange students to have a proficiency in a language or languages that is sufficient to communicate with professors and students on their studies and researches. At GSHSPA, a proficiency in a language other than Japanese may be required. There may be a case that a proficiency in Japanese is not required, while that in English is. If an exchange student takes only classes taught in English and/or communicates with professors and students only in English, then only a proficiency in English, not in Japanese, is required. Besides English and Japanese, a proficiency in other language may be required in addition. This requirement will depend on the area of studies and/or researches that an exchange student chooses.

II. Outline of the Process to Become an Exchange Student

The whole process begins at obtaining information on the student exchange at GSHSPA. For a graduate student who enters Chiba University as an exchange student, it ends with the registration to GSHSPA. The flow of the procedures is outlined as follows.

(1) Obtain materials for application (this brochure and document forms for application) from a responsible office at your home university and/or the adviser of your research.

(2) Ask the adviser of your research to arrange an academic staff at GSHSPA who would meet you for an interview either directly or indirectly with a video call.

- (3) Take an interview by an academic staff at GSHSPA and obtain his/her informal consent of acceptance. This academic staff, if he/she issues an informal consent of acceptance, is your prospective academic supervisor at GSHSPA.
- (4) Ask the dean of the graduate school to which you belong to recommend you formally to GSHSPA. Ask the adviser of your research to recommend you to GSHSPA.
- (5) Receive the letters of recommendation from both the graduate school and the adviser. Prepare other documents, mostly by properly filling out the forms provided by GSHSPA. Obtain a certificate of student status from your home university and a transcript from the graduate school.
- (6) Hand all documents for application to the adviser of your research. Your adviser must send them directly to your prospective academic supervisor at GSHSPA.
- (7) If you are accepted as an exchange student, you receive Certificate of Entrance Permission. You will also receive an announcement to ask your preference for arrangement of your accommodation from Chiba University's International Student Division, and are required to answer their questionnaire under their announcement regarding your accommodation.
- (8) Submit the documents for your financial status before the deadline set by GSHSPA. Along with them, provide other materials asked by Chiba University in order to apply for a Certificate of Eligibility (abbreviated as COE).
- (9) If you are not denied of admission, you receive a COE and apply for a visa to study in Japan with this.
- (10) After receiving your studying visa, come to Japan for entrance procedures under the announcement regarding entrance procedures that GSHSPA will send you.
- (11) Complete the registration and entrance procedures for admission to Chiba University.

III. Deadlines and Materials to be Submitted

1. Deadlines

The following lists all deadlines set by GSHSPA, which all prospective applicants should remember.

Deadline for Submission of Documents for Application: March 2, 2026 (must arrive).
Deadline for Submission of Documents for Financial Screening and other Materials to Apply for COE: May 15, 2026 (must arrive).

Registration for Enrollment in October 2026: From October 1 to October 7, 2026.

2. Documents for Application

GSHSPA requires for all applicants to submit the following documents.

- (1) An application form, properly filled out. A form is provided by GSHSPA.
- (2) A research plan, properly filled out. A form is provided by GSHSPA.
- (3) A curriculum vitae, properly filled out. A form is provided by GSHSPA.
- (4) A letter of recommendation by the applicant's adviser of research, written in either Japanese or English (Original). A form is provided by GSHSPA.
- (5) A formal letter of recommendation by the graduate school to which the applicant belongs, written in either Japanese or English (Original).
- (6) A certificate of student status issued by the applicant's home university (Original).
- (7) A transcript issued by the graduate school to which the applicant belongs (Original).
- (8) A certificate for an informal consent of acceptance written by the prospective academic supervisor. A form is provided by GSHSPA (Original).

The documents (1), (2), (3), (4), (5), (6) and (7) must be sent to the prospective academic supervisor by the adviser of his/her research. Then the prospective academic supervisor submits them to GSHSPA with (8).

The letter of recommendation by the adviser of the applicant's research must be issued with his/her signature across the seal. The formal letter of recommendation by the graduate school must be written on its official letterhead and be issued with the signature of the Dean of the graduate school across the seal.

3. Materials for COE

To apply for a COE, Chiba University requires for a successful student to provide some materials. We will announce them later.

IV. Instructions by Steps

1. What to Do before Preparing Documents for Application

If a prospective applicant is seriously interested in applying for student exchange at GSHSPA, the first thing he/she must do is to take an interview by an academic staff at GSHSPA in his/her area of studies, and receive his/her informal consent of acceptance. A candidate for the interviewer must be arranged by his/her current adviser of research at his/her home university, through his/her personal connection on research activities. The interview can be done either directly or indirectly with a communication device (a video call). In the interview, the academic staff evaluates the applicant's comprehensive ability to study and research in his/her area of studies. Not only an excellence in his/her specific academic field but also a general ability to be a graduate student, such as a proficiency in a language, an ability to cooperate with the academic staff and his students etc., are evaluated. The academic staff who interviews an applicant has a total discretion over the decision to issue an informal consent of acceptance.

The academic staff who has issued an informal consent of acceptance becomes the prospective academic supervisor of the prospective applicant if he/she applies. To complete the application, the prospective academic supervisor is required to prove his/her consent to GSHSPA by submitting a certificate of his/her consent with his/her signature. Therefore an applicant must ask him/her to fill out and sign the form of certificate at the end of the interview.

The next thing to do is to ask the graduate school to which an applicant belongs and his/her current adviser of research to recommend him/her to GSHSPA. An applicant must receive a formal letter of recommendation by the graduate school, and a letter of professional recommendation by his/her adviser. The quality of these letters is crucial for his/her acceptance. A chance to be accepted will be doomed by just one slightly bad letter, even if an applicant has already found a prospective academic supervisor at GSHSPA.

2. Preparing and Submitting Documents for Application

An applicant for student exchange must prepare documents as GSHSPA requires, and submit them to his/her prospective academic supervisor at Chiba University, through the current adviser on his/her research. The list of these documents was provided in III.2.

Note that applicants cannot send any documents for application directly to their prospective academic supervisors or the office of GSHSPA. No member of GSHSPA reviews the documents if they are sent from an applicant himself/herself. GSHSPA has a total discretion to turn down the applicant if it finds a fraud in the documents submitted.

As indicated in III.1, all documents for application must arrive no later than March 2, 2026. They should be sent by registered mail. They are not returned in any circumstances.

3. Conditions for Acceptance

There are two basic conditions that Chiba University requires for an acceptance as a graduate exchange student. First, an applicant must submit a meaningful plan of his/her study and/or research at Chiba University. Secondly, he/she must provide a proof that his/her study and/or research at Chiba University are considered to be valuable at the graduate program of the sister university to which he/she belongs.

The first condition is satisfied by completing the application form and the form for a research plan in a level that GSHSPA regards them as adequate. An applicant for an exchange student (in a specific sense) must list several classes you wish to take. In each term (the 4th and 5th terms in the second (autumn) semester, and the 1st and 2nd terms in the first (spring) semester), you should take at least 7 classes/a week. For the courses and its contents for the Master program students at GSHSPA, please refer to the Chiba University Syllabus Search System (<https://syllabus.gs.chiba-u.jp/>) that is linked from Chiba University's website. An applicant for an exchange research student must state clearly a purpose of his/her research, an achievement that he/she expects to have in the period of study he/she has chosen, a description of steps toward the achievement etc. in the form for a research plan. GSHSPA has a total discretion to decide the adequacy of contents in these forms.

If one applies for an exchange research student, the proof in the second condition must be provided extensively in the letter of recommendation by the adviser of his/her research. If one applies for an exchange student (in a specific sense), it is provided partly by the agreement for student exchange between Chiba University and his/her home university, through the agreement on unit exchange. However, GSHSPA recommends strongly that the letter of recommendation by the adviser of his/her research also provides an extensive explanation.

These are just basic ones that GSHSPA expects for all applicants to satisfy quite easily. Much more important conditions in the decision on acceptance are that an applicant has found a prospective academic supervisor with whom he/she is acquainted closely, and that he/she is highly esteemed for a comprehensive academic ability in the letters of recommendation.

4. Announcement of Acceptance

GSHSPA has a total discretion over decision on acceptance. If GSHSPA decides an applicant to be accepted, Certificate of Entrance Permission will be sent to this successful candidate. The certificate states that the candidate has been accepted as an exchange (research) student by the Dean of GSHSPA.

5. Obtaining a Visa

To enter Japan, a successful candidate should obtain a Certificate of Eligibility for Japanese Residency (abbreviated as COE) from the Immigration Bureau of Japan. Chiba University takes care of the application for a successful candidate. A successful candidate is required to provide all related materials as Chiba University asks for, properly and promptly. The list of these materials will be announced later. Since parts of these are the documents for his/her financial status, GSHSPA requires for a successful candidate to submit these materials along with the documents for his/her financial status, in order to economize on time for application. Therefore, all materials must arrive at GSHSPA no later than May 15, 2025. They are not returned in any circumstances.

In order to fill out an application form for COE properly, or to be properly prepared, a successful candidate may be required to modify and resubmit the application documents by the Student Affairs Office of GSHSPA. A successful student, therefore, must secure a way (ways) of communication by which Student Affairs Office of GSHSPA can reach him/her for a while.

After receiving the COE from the Immigration Bureau, GSHSPA sends it to the successful student and the student applies for a studying visa to the Japanese Embassy.

The whole process, from preparing materials to apply for a COE to obtaining a visa, may take about 3 months or more. GSHSPA, therefore, strongly advises for all successful candidates to submit these materials as soon as they are ready.

6. Coming to Japan and Admission

All exchange students (in a broad sense) are required to complete their entrance procedures at Nishi-Chiba campus in Chiba University during the period specified by Chiba University. For admission in October 2026, the period is from October 1 to October 7, 2026.

7. Chiba University's International Student Division (International Support Desk (ISD))

Please refer to ISD web site for information regarding procedures before and immediately after entry into Japan.

<https://www.chiba-u.ac.jp/international/isd/index.html>

VI. Inquiries on the Student Exchange Program at GSHSPA

If a prospective applicant at a sister university has a question on student exchange at GSHSPA, it is strongly advised that he/she makes the adviser on his/her research ask it to an academic staff at GSHSPA with whom he/she is acquainted closely. GSHSPA advises strongly not to ask a question directly to the representative at GSHSPA.

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