

**Graduate Program in Global Governance and Sustainable Development (G2SD),
Tohoku University Graduate School of International Cultural Studies (GSICS)**

**Application for the 3-year Doctoral Program
for the Academic Year of 2026
(Beginning in April 2026)**

I. Aim

The aim of this graduate program is to enhance students' ability to advance global governance and sustainable development. Since the challenges associated with these tasks are complex and inter-linked, what is needed to deal with them are the abilities to question conventional wisdom and to design innovative analytical frameworks on the basis of inter-disciplinary knowledge. This program intends to develop such abilities through a combination of critical reviews of theories, on the one hand, and problem-oriented empirical studies, on the other.

II. Admission Policy

The Tohoku University Graduate School of International Cultural Studies provides students with the ability to think and analyze in an international and interdisciplinary manner, advanced foreign language skills, and a high level of specialized knowledge and clear awareness of issues in the following three areas: (1) diverse regional cultures of Japan and other areas seen from an international perspective, (2) global issues concerning the environment, resources, and a sustainable society in which all humankind can coexist, and (3) language underlying international society. Our educational goal is to train professionals, teachers, and researchers who can play an active role on a global scale with their rich education, international perspective, and high ideal of contributing to the stewardship and development of human civilization and culture. To achieve this goal, we seek students who have clear aspirations of becoming creative researchers or professionals and are active in the international community, equipped with flexible thinking skills, broad academic knowledge, and advanced language skills.

In admitting students, we have entrance examinations in the following categories: general selection, special selection for international applicants applying from overseas, selection for those advancing to the doctoral program from our MA program (only for the three-year doctoral program), entrance examination for the Global Governance and Sustainable Development Program, and entrance examination for the International Graduate Program in Language Sciences. These are used to select applicants who have the advanced abilities and qualities needed to conduct research in line with the educational ideals/goals mentioned above.

The three-year doctoral program

In the category of general selection, applicants are evaluated based on (1) their MA theses, (2) their scores in a written test to assess whether they have the advanced knowledge in their specialized fields, and (3) an interview and a review of their application materials, which are to assess their motivation, research plan, and foreign language skills needed for research at a higher level, among other things. These are given roughly equal weight.

In the category of special selection for international applicants applying from overseas, applicants who are recommended by their home universities are evaluated based on (1) a review of their application materials and (2) an interview. We assess whether they have advanced knowledge in their specialized areas. We also examine their ability to conduct research, motivation, and research plan. These are given roughly equal weight.

In the category of selection for those who wish to advance to the doctoral program from our MA program, we assess whether applicants have advanced knowledge in their specialized areas and high-level foreign language skills needed for research, based on (1) their MA theses and (2) a review of their application materials and an interview. These are given roughly equal weight.

In the entrance examination for the Global Governance and Sustainable Development Program, applicants are evaluated based on (1) a review of their application materials and (2) an interview. We examine whether they have the high-level English proficiency needed to study in the program (as English is the medium of instruction), the ability to think critically about today's social issues, and the ability to solve practical problems. These are given roughly equal weight.

In the entrance examination for the International Graduate Program in Language Sciences, applicants are evaluated based on (1) a review of their application materials and (2) an interview. We examine whether they have the high-level English proficiency needed to study in the program (as English is the medium of instruction), the advanced specialized knowledge necessary in the field of language sciences, the practical ability to conduct research, and the ability to perform interdisciplinary analyses. These are given roughly equal weight.

We expect students to possess broad knowledge in their areas of expertise, advanced foreign language skills, and ability to conduct creative research, before their enrollment.

III. Curriculum

All courses in the Graduate Program in Global Governance and Sustainable Development are conducted in English. A minimum of 12 units of course work and completion of a Doctoral dissertation are required for the Doctoral degree.

IV. Degree

The degree offered is a “Doctor of Philosophy (International Cultural Studies)” or “Doctor of Philosophy.” Students will also be offered a certificate recognizing completion of the program.

V. Application

1. Positions Available:

Around 2 for the academic year 2026

Note: Admission to the program takes place every April and October. The descriptions in this document are applicable only to April 2026 admissions. For October 2026 admissions, please refer to documents published in the future.

2. Application Requirements

Applicants for the 3-year Doctoral program should meet one of the following criteria:

- (1) Those who have received, or will receive a Master’s degree or professional degree by March 2026.
- (2) Those who have received, or will receive a Master’s degree or professional degree, or an equivalent degree from a graduate school in a foreign country by March 2026.
- (3) Those who have completed, or will complete a course conducted by an educational institution of a foreign country via distance learning while residing in Japan, and have received, or will receive a Master’s degree or professional degree, or an equivalent degree from that course by March 2026.
- (4) Those who have completed, or will complete a graduate program of a foreign educational facility in Japan, which (i) has been approved by the educational system of that country to operate the graduate program and (ii) is designated separately by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan (henceforth ‘the Minister’), and have received, or will receive a Master’s degree, a professional degree, or an equivalent degree by March 2026.
- (5) Those who have completed, or will complete a program at the United Nations University, and have received, or will receive a Master’s degree, or an equivalent degree by March 2026.
- (6) Those who have been designated by the Minister. (Notification No. 118 of 1989 from the Ministry of Education)
 - i) Those who have engaged in research activities for 2 years or longer in universities or research institutes, etc., after graduating from a university, and who are judged, according to the applicants’ research activities, to have reached a standard of achievement equivalent to or above the status of a Master’s degree or professional degree.
 - ii) Those who have engaged in research activities for 2 years or longer in universities or research institutes, etc., after completing 16 years of school education in a foreign country, or after completing 16 years of school education by finishing a course conducted by a foreign university via distance learning while residing in Japan, and who are judged by the GSICS, according to the applicants’ research activities, to have reached a standard of achievement equivalent to or above the status of a Master’s degree or professional degree.
- (7) Those whose academic abilities are judged by the GSICS, based on GSICS’s individual qualification examination, to be equal to or greater than those of a person with a Master’s degree or professional degree, and who are 24 years of age or older at the end of March 2026.

Note 1: Applicants who will receive a Master's degree from a graduate school of Tohoku University (including GSICS) shall fall under qualification (1) above, and are exempt from the fees for application and admission.

Note 2: Applicants that fall under qualification (6) or (7) must undergo a pre-qualification examination and are required to submit the designated documents for this purpose to the GSICS Office of Academic Affairs by November 7, 2025.

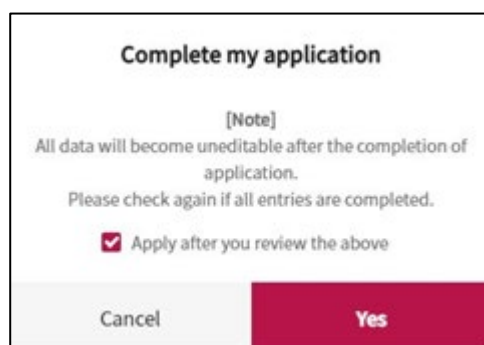
Please contact the GSICS Office of Academic Affairs for inquiries regarding application qualifications. See page 7 for contact information.

3. Application Procedures

(1) Outline of the Online Application

Applications are accepted only through the online application system, The Admissions Office (hereinafter referred to as TAO).

Please upload all of your application documents listed in (2) onto TAO during the application period specified in (3). Your application will only be accepted if you complete the application procedures through TAO during the application period. Please make sure that your application is complete by checking all the necessary documents are uploaded and that all the necessary information is filled. A pop-up window will ask you to confirm again. Check the box and click the "Yes" button. By clicking the "Yes" button you can complete the process.



If we have any questions about your application, our admissions staff will contact you via TAO. Please follow their instructions.

TAO: <https://admissions-office.net/en/portal>

(2) Application Documents

a) **Application for Admission:** Please download the form from the GSICS website and write in English.

b) **Photograph:** The photo must be taken within 3 months prior to the date on which you submit your application. It must not be edited or altered in any way. If you wear glasses during the interview, please upload a photo of yourself with those glasses.

c) **Certificate of Graduation (or Expected Graduation):** A certificate written in either English or Japanese. If the original certificate is in a language other than English or Japanese, attach the original as well.

d) **Academic Transcript:** A transcript must be issued in either English or Japanese from the graduate school where your Master's degree was or will be conferred, and it must bear the graduate school's official seal on it. In the case where the original transcript is in a language other than English or Japanese, attach the original as well.

e) **Research Plan:** Describe your research plan in English in 2,000 words or less.

f) **Sample Research Paper Written in English:**

- Note that, as a Sample Research Paper, you can submit the full text of your Master's Thesis if it is written in English. In this case, you can substitute g) for f).

g) **Both the (A) Full Text and (B) Abstract of your Master's Thesis:** The Abstract shall be written in English in 2,000 words or less.

- g-1) In case you have not yet completed your Master's Thesis, you are requested to submit the **Statement of a Master's Thesis Plan** written in English. Its word count must be between 3,000 and 5,000 words, and a summary of each chapter must be included.
- g-2) In case your Master's Thesis is not written in English: You need to submit the following two items: **your Master's Thesis** in the original language and a **Statement of a Master's Thesis** in English (between 3,000 and 5,000 words, including a summary of each chapter). If you have not yet completed your Master's Thesis, all you need to submit is a **Statement of a Master's Thesis** in English.
- g-3) If your graduate program does not require a Master's Thesis, please see the FAQ section on our website.

h) Formal Certificate of TOEFL® Test Score (iBT or ITP) or TOEIC® Test Score (Listening & Reading Test or Listening & Reading IP Test) or IELTS™ Band Score (academic): For applicants for whom English is a foreign language.

Applicants who attended middle/high schools for four years or longer where the primary language of teaching is English in one of the countries specified below may present a document to that effect from the school's principal or guidance counsellor, in place of the test scores described above. Applicable countries: Australia, Canada, the Caribbean Islands (Not all Caribbean Islands are eligible. Please inquire in advance.), Ireland, New Zealand, Singapore, the UK, and the US. Please download the form from the GSICS website.

- i) Statement of Financial Position:** For foreign applicants living abroad at the time of application; examples: a tax return, bank certificate, or a personal financial statement showing a sufficient financial base for studying abroad.
- j) Certificate of Residence or a copy of both sides of Residence Card:** For applicants who are foreign residents of Japan at the time of application and who have lived in Japan for more than 90 days: The certificate is to be issued by the head of the local municipality, must contain your resident status and must have been issued within 3 months prior to the date on which you submit your application.
- k) Certificate of Government-sponsored Foreign Student Status:** For foreign applicants who are studying in another Japanese university as a foreign student sponsored by the Japanese Government.

l) Application Fee ¥30,000:

- 1) Applicants residing in Japan are to pay the application fee via ATM or online bank transfer.

The account information is as follows:

Bank: MUFG bank (Bank code: 0005)

Branch: Wakatake branch (Branch code: 809)

Account type: Savings account (普通)

Account number: 2259370

Account holder's name: 国立大学法人東北大学 (Kana: タﾞイ トウホク タﾞイ ガク)

- * Please make sure to enter "KD" and your name in the payer's column.

e.g., KD ***** ***** (Your name in *katakana*)

Family name First name

- * Please pay the bank transfer fee yourself.
- * Foreign remittances cannot be made to this bank account.
- * If you have paid the application fee but decide not to apply for any reason, please contact the GSICS Office of Academic Affairs by December 16, 2025.
- * Please submit a copy of the receipt, ATM receipt or a screenshot of online banking that shows your bank account, the amount you paid, the date of transfer and the payer name.

- 2) Applicants residing abroad are to pay the application fee online via credit card, using the online payment system. "e-shiharai.net".

URL: <https://e-shiharai.net/ecard/>

When you make a payment in the system, please proceed as follows:



- * You are to pay the transfer/handling fees in addition to the application fee.
- * The application fee is nonrefundable once the application has been accepted. However, if the application is not accepted, or the application fee is accidentally paid twice, it will be refunded to the payer's credit account via the credit card company three months after the application deadline. Please contact the GSICS Office of Academic Affairs by December 16, 2025. At that time, transfer/handling fee will be charged in addition to the application fee. Refunds cannot be made if the payer cancels the credit card, or uses a prepaid credit card not attached to an account.
- * Please submit an image of the "Results" screen on the e-shiharai.net page.

3) Applicants sponsored by the Japanese Government are exempted from paying the application fee.

- Note 1: Incomplete applications will not be accepted. After we accept your application, no corrections are permitted. The application fee is non-refundable.
- Note 2: Current GSICS students who wish to apply for this program are not required to submit application documents h) and l).
- Note 3: We do not accept an IELTS™ Band Score (academic) older than two years at the time of application. We accept a TOEFL® (iBT or ITP) or TOEIC® test score (Listening & Reading Test or Listening & Reading IP Test) older than two years at the time of application. Applicants are strongly recommended to submit their most recent scores. We only accept TOEFL iBT® scores from a single test date, not MyBest™ scores. We accept TOEFL® iBT Home Edition, but we do not accept IELTS Indicator.
- Note 4: After admission, students will be assigned to one of four GSICS departments (the Department of Asian and African Studies, the Department of International Politics and Economy, the Department of International Environment and Resources Policy, or the Department of Multiculturalism) based upon their choice on the application form and will be granted use of that department's facilities. In principle, applicants are expected to choose the department that is overseen by their prospective supervisor.

(3) Application Period

All application documents must be uploaded onto TAO between December 1 (9:00 a.m. JST) and 16, 2025 (4:59 p.m. JST). If any of them is found to contain fraudulent information, the application will be automatically rejected. In the case that applicants make a false statement in their application documents, they may have their admission revoked even after admission.

- Note 1: Prior to submitting an application, applicants are strongly recommended to contact and consult their prospective supervisors about their research plans after admission.
- Note 2: Applicants must submit their original copies of their transcripts and certificate of graduation, etc. upon admission. Failure can result in the withdrawal of their admission.

4. Screening

Applicants are screened on the basis of a comprehensive evaluation of the application documents (including their academic transcript and research plan), English proficiency, and an interview conducted via an online video conferencing system in February 2026. Applicants are required to

make an oral presentation on their previous research achievements, such as their Master's Thesis, and their future research plans, and they may also be asked some questions regarding their basic knowledge of their research topics in the interview. We will evaluate applicants on a four-point scale.

Applicants will be notified of the details of the interview such as the time and date after we have received your application documents.

5. Announcement of Acceptance and Enrollment

(a) Screening results will be posted on the GSICS website at 5:00 p.m. JST on February 18, 2026. (<https://www.intcul.tohoku.ac.jp/en/admission>)

(b) Documents needed for enrollment will be sent to successful applicants. All enrollment procedures are to be completed by mid-March 2026.

(c) Successful applicants are requested to pay the following fees at the time of registration:

① Admission Fee: ¥282,000

Note: Successful applicants who are currently enrolled in GSICS are not required to pay the admission fee.

② Tuition Fee: ¥ 267,900 (half of the annual tuition fee of ¥535,800)

Note 1: If the tuition fee is revised during your period of study, you will be charged the revised tuition fee as of the date of the revision.

Note 2: Information on exemption of admission or tuition fees is included in document (b).

③ Insurance and other expenses: There is a ¥2,600 fee for Insurance for injuries from accidents (Gakkensai). There is also a fee for foreign student insurance for foreign students. (*The premium depends on the type of insurance chosen.) In addition, there is a ¥8,000 fee for joining the Tohoku University Alumni Association (¥6,000 for those who completed their undergraduate studies or graduate studies for Master's degree at Tohoku University). Further details will be provided in the admission documents. All fees are current as of October 1, 2025 and indicate the total fee for all three years.

6. Long-term Course Program

We offer a Long-term Course Program for students who have difficulty completing in the course in the normal 3 years due to concurrent employment, family duties, caregiving duties, or the like. Although the Doctoral Program normally lasts 3 years, it can be extended to 6 years. Those who wish to extend their period of study from 3 years to 6 years may apply to enroll as Long-term Course Students. Please note that the maximum period of residency for the Doctoral Program is 6 years. Those who wish to enroll in the Long-term Course Program must follow the instructions in the notification of acceptance, which will be delivered by mail after the announcement of acceptance and submit the prescribed documents when following other admissions procedures.

Coursework for students who are deemed eligible for the Long-term Course Program is set in accordance with the curriculum and schedule for regular students.

The annual tuition fee for long-term course students is calculated as follows: the total amount of tuition fees for the standard term of study (3 years) is divided by the entire length of the extended term of study (6 years). For details, please contact the GSICS Office of Academic Affairs.

7. Handling of Personal Information

(1) Personal information held by Tohoku University is handled in strict compliance with the "Act on the Protection of Personal Information (Act No. 57 of 2003)", the "Personal Information Protection Regulations of Tohoku University" and any other relevant regulations.

(2) Personal information such as examination results used for the selection of applicants will be used for the following purposes: (a) selection of applicants, (b) admission procedures, (c) pre-enrollment support, (d) follow-up surveys, (e) post-enrollment support (scholarships, tuition exemption, health care, etc.), (f) academic guidance, (g) tuition collection, (h) surveys and research (for improving the entrance exam and analyzing application trends). For applicants who are admitted to the university, personal information from before and after the entrance examination may be analyzed together.

(3) Work related to entrance examinations and educational affairs may be performed by contractors entrusted by the University. In the event that all or part of the personal information of applicants is provided to the contractor, necessary measures will be taken to ensure that the information is

handled appropriately in accordance with the "Personal Information Protection Regulations of Tohoku University" and any other relevant regulations.

8. Educational Data Usage

Data, including personal information, that Tohoku University collects through its education/learning activities and stores on its information systems (hereafter, Educational Data) is analyzed with the latest analytical and A.I. technology and is considered vital to our implementation of evidence-based education.

Educational Data will be used effectively and appropriately in compliance with our "Statement on Educational Data Usage," "Policy on Educational Data Usage," and "Tohoku University's 8 Principles of Educational Data Acquisition."

After being admitted to the university, students' personal information, such as their entrance exam scores etc., is merged with the university's Educational Data.

URL : <https://www.tohoku.ac.jp/japanese/studentinfo/education/08/education0801/>

9. Other Information

- (1) Disclosure of the examination results is available at the request of applicants during the fiscal year of the examination.
- (2) Appropriate support shall be provided for visual, auditory, physical, internal and/or developmental handicapped applicants. Please check our website for more information and contact the GSICS Office of Academic Affairs at your earliest convenience.

URL : https://www.intcul.tohoku.ac.jp/en/contents/admission_info#special_accommodations

10. Contact Information

If you have any questions, please contact us at:

Office of Academic Affairs

Graduate School of International Cultural Studies Tohoku University

E-mail: int-kkdk@grp.tohoku.ac.jp