

Guide for Application for JSPS/MEXT Grants-in-Aid (KAKENHI)

The information of this material is based on the presentation given by a University Research Administrator (URA) at the information session on application for JSPS/MEXT Grants-in-Aid (KAKENHI) held by the Graduate School of Frontier Sciences on Friday, September 26, 2014.

1. Points to Be Considered Prior to Application

- Choose an appropriate grant type for your research project.
 Types of Grants Programs (JSPS website): <http://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-grants/grants01.html>
 - Each type has different criteria for screening.
 - When applications for a large fund are screened, reviewers tend to evaluate the proposals with an emphasis on past research activities of the Principal Investigator. It is recommended that beginners apply for a small grant first and develop research gradually.
- Choose an appropriate research field, so that your application will be reviewed by those whose research interest is similar to your proposal.
 - Applicants for “Young Scientists (B)” may choose two research fields.
- Even if your application was not successful in the past, never give up.
 - Check your past screening result and try to improve the weak points of your application.

2. General Advice

- Application document is a kind of presentation. Make your application persuasive and impactful, so that the reviewers got interested in and understand your application.
- Avoid self-satisfaction and write your research plan from reviewers’ aspect.
- Try to improve your application again and again. Do not leave any typos in your application.
- Do not put too much letters in the form. The recommended font size is 11 point or bigger. (Remember that some reviewers are elderly.)
- Application should be easy to understand for reviewers who have different research interests from the applicant. Also be informed that a reviewer tends to be required to read several tens of applications.
 (e.g.) **bold letters**, underlines, larger or different fonts, figures, pictures, graphs, itemization
 - Avoid using colors. Reviewers will read applications printed in black-and-white.
- Since the grant is competitive, applicants should emphasize the uniqueness, academic significance, and superiority of their proposal to others.
- Read the instructions of the application form, and follow them.
- Spend enough time. Prepare and revise well.

3. Advice on Each Item in the Application Form

3.1. Title of the Research Project

- Title should be impactful, so that the reviewers got interested in your application.
- Title should be specific enough and directly express the contents of your research project.

3.2. Purpose of the Research

Grant-in-Aid for Young Scientists B - 1

Purpose of the Research

The applicant shall indicate the general nature of the research and the specific purpose of the research, after succinctly summarizing it and providing an outline at the beginning, and with the existing academic literature referred to where necessary. In particular, details shall be given clearly with a focus on the following points. [Refer to the rules concerning the screening and assessment for Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research. (cf. Application Procedures for Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research)]

- 1) Scientific background of the research (e.g., domestic and overseas trends related to the research and positioning of the research; how the applicant has reached the concept based on his or her achievements in past research work; and details of achievements of past research work where the purpose is to attain a greater level of sophistication)
- 2) What will be elucidated and to what extent will it be pursued during the research period
- 3) Scientific characteristics, originality and expected achievements and significance of the research in the area

Purpose of the Research (Outline) * Concerning the Purpose of the Research Project, the applicant should succinctly summarize and describe in detail.

Reviewers may decide whether they carefully read further descriptions by reading the outline.

- Describe accurately and plainly. The reviewers' research field may be different from yours.
- Outline: Simply state the background and overview of your research project.
- Main part (under the broken line):
 - Clearly summarize the specific purpose of your research project into about three points. Then, explain "What will be elucidated and to what extent will it be pursued", breaking down the purpose.
 - "Scientific background" should be within **ONE page**.
 - Avoid using technical terms that only those specializing the research field can understand.
 - Use headings if possible to make the points clear.
- In most cases, your research project should be established based on the past research outcomes.

3.3. Research Plan and Methods

Grant-in-Aid for Young Scientists B - 3

Research Plan and Methods

The applicant should provide details of the research plan and the methods for achieving the objectives of the research, after succinctly summarizing it and providing an outline at the beginning. The plan should be divided into one for FY2016 and one for from FY2017 on. The literature should be referred to as needed. The plan and methods should indicate achievements through a discussion from multiple aspects, such as the action in the event that the research does not progress as originally planned. In addition, the following points should be highlighted.

- 1) Specific devices for implementing the research (such as ideas for effectively advancing the research and the assistance of Research Collaborators for effectively advancing the research)
- 2) Where the research is being implemented by a research team, the specific roles (using figures, tables and other visual aids) of the Principal Investigator, and if necessary, the Research Collaborators [overseas co-researchers, company-employed researchers not eligible to apply for KAKENHI, other persons offering research support, such as technical experts and intellectual property specialists, graduate students and others (names and number of members may be stated)]
- 3) If the Principal Investigator is employed in conducting other research work or if the Principal Investigator has other research work that is not an occupational task, connection with and differences from the present research

Moreover, if the research environment changes significantly halfway through the research period, due to personnel changes, retirements, etc., the applicant should also describe the way how the location of the implementation of the research is secured, research implementation methods, etc.

Research Plan and Method (Outline) * Concerning the Research Plan and Method to accomplish the Purpose of the Research, the applicant should succinctly summarize and describe in detail.

- State the summary first, and research methods and phases in order. Show the plan (what will be achieved, to what extent, by when) which can be achieved during the research period without too many strains.

- The research plan and methods should correspond to the purpose of the research. Avoid stating new issues here. The research plan should be narrowed enough.
- Use subheadings with serial numbers.
- When using figures and tables, you need to explain their meaning by sentences. Too many figures and tables may lower the evaluation to your application.
- Describe logically, simply, and with story, so that reviewers can read your application without stopping.
- Avoid explaining details too much. Reviewer may miss the whole picture of your plan.

3.4. Recent Research Activities

Grant-in-Aid for Young Scientists B-5

Research Achievements

The applicant should fill in the important research papers/articles, books, industrial property rights and invited lectures the Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator(s) (*kenkyū-buntansha*) presented up to the present relating to the research in the sequence of publication from new to old with serial numbers assigned. Lines should be drawn between groups of research papers and others published in the same calendar year to separate them. (The lines can be moved.) Forthcoming research papers/articles in academic journals may be included, only if they have been accepted for publication.

In addition, if the need arises, it is also possible to fill in the recent research activities of the Co-Investigators (*renkei-kenkyusha*). If the recent research activities are filled in, double lines should be drawn to distinguish between them. (The double lines can be moved.) They should be filled in per researcher in the sequence of publication from new to old. (It is not necessary to draw lines between every year.)

Moreover, enter research achievements focusing primarily on achievements from 2011 onward. It is also acceptable to enter research paper or other achievement (up to ten items), which are closely related to the current research, or which are key ones that you published up to the present, even if they were published before 2011.

1) For published research papers/articles, state the title, the names of authors, name of the journal, referee reading (or not), volume, page numbers of the initial and final pages and the year of publication.

2) The abovementioned sequence of such items is not compulsory as long as all of the items are included. If there are many authors, only include several authors omitting others (if any authors' names are omitted, state the number of the authors and the order on the author list for the related researchers). The Principal Investigator should be marked with a double underline, Co-Investigator(s) (*kenkyū-buntansha*) with a single underline, and the Co-Investigator(s) (*renkei-kenkyusha*) with a dotted underline.

2015 onward

- Based on “Recent Research Activities”, reviewers will judge whether the applicant will be able to appropriately conduct the research project and achieve the expected results.
- Reviewers will check whether academic articles related to the research project have been published in the journals of the related field.
- Submitting many academic articles to academic journals is investment to obtain grants.

3.5. Research Costs

- Reviewers will check the relationship with the research plan and necessity and validity of the research costs. Request appropriate amount, and avoid stating purchase of unnecessary stuffs.
- If you plan to spend most of the grant to buy research equipment, clearly state the benefit by introducing the equipment, such as what kind of data you will be able to obtain and what will be discovered.
- Express your sense of responsibility for what you will achieve, when, and to what extent.
- If your application is successful, JSPS will approve 70 – 80 % of your request in general.
- If the amount of grant you will apply for almost equals to the border between two program types, applying for the type whose maximum amount of grant is lower generally tends to be easier. (e.g. If the applicant requests 5,000,000JPY, applying for Young Scientists (B) tends to be easier than applying for Young Scientists (A).)

4. Summary

- Be conscious of the originality of your research, and emphasize the sales points.
- State clearly what you will pursue, and describe specifically how you will achieve your goal.
 - Narrow your research subject.
 - If you cannot achieve what you write in your application, that is not good; however, it does not cause any problems to achieve more than what you write.
- Specify the evidence of the cost of your research project.
- Ask your colleagues to read your application, and revise and improve your application.

Reference and Contact

- JSPS website: <http://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-grants/index.html>
- Kavli IPMU internal website: <http://www.ipmu.jp/node/1799> (in English)
- Any inquiries regarding this material should be directed to kakenhi-support@ipmu.jp.

