

Japan-WCO Human Resource Development Programme
(Scholarship Programme)

【Strategic Management and Intellectual Property Rights】
2026-2027

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

Introduction

1. The major objective of the Japan-WCO Human Resource Development Programme is to provide scholars with the conceptual understanding and technical competence that are required of leaders who lead organizations in the area of taxation and Customs. Scholars are expected to return to their Customs administrations at the conclusion of the programme in order to utilize their new knowledge and skills and disseminate them throughout their Customs administrations.
2. The Japan-WCO Human Resource Development Programme (Scholarship Programme) provides a grant covering travel, subsistence, admission, tuition, and other approved expenses to enable promising young Customs officers from developing countries to undertake Master's level studies at Aoyama Gakuin University (AGU) in Tokyo, Japan.
3. The following administrative provisions govern this Scholarship Programme. If a nominee or a concerned person in a nominating administration has any questions, he/she should address them to the Capacity Building Directorate of the WCO Secretariat before the Scholarship is accepted.

Capacity Building Directorate,
World Customs Organization,
Rue du Marché 30, 1210 Brussels, Belgium
Tel : + 32 2 209 96 47
Fax : + 32 2 209 94 96
e-mail: scholarship@wcoomd.org

Conditions of candidacy and selection

4. The candidates should be in good health to productively pursue studies in Japan, preferably below 40 years of age as of 1 April 2026.
5. The recipients of Scholarships under this Programme will enroll in the Graduate School of Business (GSB) at Aoyama Gakuin University (AGU) and study for a degree of **Master of Arts in Business Administration, specializing in Strategic Management and Intellectual Property Rights**.
6. This Scholarship is for one academic year starting from April 2026. There will be a preparatory course in March 2026 for a few weeks before the start of the Programme. The Scholarship period cannot be extended.
7. The candidates should be Customs officers **fully proficient in English** (a minimum TOEFL score of internet Based Test (iBT) 79 / TOEFL iBT home edition 79 / Paper Based Test (PBT) 550 or IELTS Academic Module 6.0, to prove their language proficiency). They should have a university degree or equivalent qualification.

8. The candidates should have at least **2 years** of work experience in Customs and should have assessed potential for advancement. In the selection, preference will be given to candidates who have experience in IPR border enforcement, and who are expected to work in the IPR-related section of their Customs administration after this Scholarship Programme.
9. Individuals who have already been awarded a scholarship under the Japan-WCO Human Resource Development Programme in the past will not be entitled to apply for this Scholarship Programme.
10. The candidates should be eligible to participate in this Programme according to the rules and regulations of the home administration and relevant authorities.
11. After the completion of the Programme, **the candidates should continue to work in their home Customs administration for at least 3 years.**
12. The candidates will be selected by the WCO in consultation with AGU. AGU shall inform the candidates about their selection or otherwise. The WCO will send a congratulatory letter to the administrations whose candidates have been selected.
13. In accepting a Scholarship, the candidate:
 - Must fill out and submit Scholar Guidelines to WCO, which will be shared later.
 - Undertakes to work as a full-time graduate student on the assigned Programme. It will not be possible to undertake other activities not related to the Programme.
 - Undertakes to comply with the laws and show due respect for the culture and way of life of the host country.
14. The application process for candidates is as follows:
 - The applicant requests access to the Application Forms via the **online registration** option on AGU's SMIPRP website (<http://www.aoyamasmiprp.jp/>). The applicant will be provided with an ID and Password enabling him or her to login and download the application forms.
 - NOTE: The Application Forms are only available for download beginning from **early June, 2025** and ending on **22 August, 2025**.
 - The applicant must then complete the **application forms** and **submit them with all supporting documents** (including the Nomination Form from your Administration, which is downloadable from the SMIPRP website). All documents **must reach AGU by 25 August, 2025** to the AGU Master's Programme Admissions Office at the address indicated below.
15. **The original set of Application Forms with all supporting materials, including the Nomination Form from the candidate's Administration,** should be completed and returned to:

Master's Program Admissions Office
Graduate School of Business
Aoyama Gakuin University
4-4-25 Shibuya, Shibuya-ku
Tokyo 150-8366
Japan
Telephone : + 81 3 3409 6239
Fax : + 81 3 3409 4575
e-mail: info_smiprp@busi.aoyama.ac.jp
Website: <http://www.aoyamasmiprp.jp/>

with the envelope marked, "Application for the WCO Scholarship". For more detailed information, please see the "Application Procedures" of AGU, as enclosed herewith.

16. A duplicate set of the Application Package will be made and sent to the WCO Secretariat by the AGU Admissions Office. Therefore, it is not necessary to send a duplicate set to the WCO Secretariat.
17. Please note that **applications received after the deadline will not be considered**. As late submissions, including of supporting documents such as proof of English proficiency, are not acceptable, applicants and nominating Administrations are encouraged to prepare for required documents well in advance.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Accommodation and living allowance

18. An all-inclusive allowance of 147,000 Japanese yen per month will be granted to cover the cost of accommodation, meals, and incidental expenses for the study period. The amount of the allowance is subject to change according to the decision of the Japanese Government. (The allowance will be paid in Japanese yen.)
19. The Scholars will be offered assistance by AGU to find residential accommodation at a reasonable rent.
20. The candidates should note that the allowance will not be sufficient to cover the expenses of any accompanying dependants. No family-related expenses will be paid or added to the monthly living allowance.

Health certificate

21. The Scholars selected will have to undergo a comprehensive medical examination and submit a certificate from a licensed physician **certifying that they are free from any medical condition that would impair his/her studies during the Programme.**

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Travel costs

22. The cost of travel (return trip) between the Scholar's place of residence and Tokyo will be borne by the Programme budget. For this purpose, an economy class pre-paid air ticket by

the most direct route will be arranged by AGU through a local travel or airline office or by courier in the country of the selected candidate. Transportation costs between the Scholar's place of residence and departure/arrival airport should be borne by the Scholars.

23. Any additional costs entailed with the changes of the pre-arranged itineraries or cancellation of the flight without reasonable grounds after the issuance of the e-ticket should be borne by the Scholar or his/her home administration.

Insurance

24. No insurance coverage is provided by the WCO/Japan in respect of personal accidents or damage to or loss of personal effects during transport to or from Tokyo.

Passports - Visas

25. Persons entering Japan must hold a valid passport and visa. Vaccination requirements vary depending upon nationality, and the Scholar is personally responsible for complying with those requirements. AGU will provide the selected candidates with a letter certifying enrolment in the Japan-WCO Scholarship in order that he/she may apply to the Japanese Embassy in his/her home country for a **college student visa**, authorizing temporary residence in Japan for the duration of the Programme.

COMPLETION OF THE PROGRAMME

26. Scholars are expected to complete the Programme as scheduled. Early repatriation may be authorized only on medical grounds or for other similarly important reasons. If a Scholar withdraws from the Programme before the commencement of the Programme or before its scheduled completion, he/she shall not be entitled to any benefits from the date of the decision. The WCO may request the Scholar to refund any expenses that are incurred from his/her withdrawal. In case a refund is requested, if the scholar cannot afford this for any reason, the organization to which the Scholar belongs should undertake the obligation.
27. On completion of the Programme, the Scholar is required to go back to his/her home country without delay. In the event of no return, the WCO may request the Scholar or the organization to which the Scholar belongs to refund the scholarship. The WCO/Japan will pay travel costs, as described above, for the Scholar's return journey from Tokyo to the point of first departure. Entitlement to return travel expenses shall cease if the Scholar does not leave Tokyo within two weeks of completion of the Programme, unless he/she has any compelling reason for extending his/her stay.
28. In the event of a Scholar failing to complete the Programme, a request for partial refund may be sent to the Scholar. In the case that a refund is requested, if the scholar cannot afford this for any reason, the organization to which the Scholar belongs should undertake the obligation.
29. After half a year and 3 years respectively from completion of the Programme, Scholars should report to the WCO and AGU indicating the post they occupy in their home administration and how they have been utilizing the knowledge, skills and experience they acquired in Japan.