

GSP Information Session Q&A — October 2026

Oct 10, 2026 · 1-2pm

Below are answers to many of the questions prospective students asked at the GSP online information session on 10 October 2026. For anything concerning your individual circumstances — documents, test exemptions, visas, scholarships — please contact the GPEAK admissions office.

Applying

Is there a minimum GRE, TOEFL/IELTS or GPA score? No. GSP sets no minimum score for any test or for GPA. Aim for scores that as clearly as possible show you have a high potential for independent research in English.

Do the application process and requirements change much from year to year? As a rule, no. The schedule and requirements are broadly the same each year.

I have dual nationality. Can I apply? Yes, as long as you are eligible to reside and study in Japan.

I already hold a master's degree. Can I apply for the GSP master's programme? Yes. There is no restriction on taking a second master's degree, provided you are not proposing to repeat the same research.

I graduated recently and am working full time. Will I be asked why I am leaving my job, or for proof of employment? No. What the committee assesses is whether you are in a position to carry out the research needed for a master's or PhD thesis. You may mention your situation in your personal statement if you wish, but it is not something we ask about.

Where can I find housing information for international students? Please contact the GPEAK admissions office.

English language requirement: tests and exemptions

Can I be exempted from TOEFL/IELTS if my previous education was in English? As stated in the application guidelines, English proficiency can also be demonstrated by a bachelor's degree or other advanced degree from an accredited institution of higher education where English is the primary language of instruction.

My case is not clear-cut (for example, an English-medium degree in a non-English-speaking country, a thesis written in another language, or degrees from several countries). Do I need a test score? The panel cannot rule on individual cases during an information session. Please email the GPEAK admissions office with the specifics of your degree(s); they can review your transcript or certificate and tell you whether a test score is required.

Do I need to provide proof of the medium of instruction from my university? We would be grateful if you could provide us with information on your course/program, and its website stating that the medium of instruction is English. Or, it would also be desirable if you submit us an official document confirming that you will graduate from the university program offered in English as well as your

transcripts and degree certificate. If there is any doubt, contact the GPEAK admissions office and ask what documentation they need.

My TOEFL or IELTS score is several years old. Do I need to retake the test? Yes. TOEFL and IELTS scores are valid for two years from the test date, so a score older than that has expired and cannot be accepted; you will need to take the test again.

Research proposal and supervisors

How specific should my research proposal be? As specific as possible. A detailed proposal shows the committee that you have a concrete topic, and that you have a concrete idea of how to research it.

Am I bound to the proposal once admitted? Not in detail, but any change must be backed by sufficient background and expertise in the new topic, and the master's course is only two years, so repeated changes make it difficult to finish a thesis. Additionally, if the new research takes it outside the expertise of your supervisor, a change would require a change of supervisor and it cannot be guaranteed that this can be arranged.

Should I contact a potential supervisor before applying? No. Please do not approach individual professors to ask them to supervise you; supervisors are assigned after admission. You should, however, check that there are faculty members at Komaba working in your area. If you cannot find anyone, that is a sign it may be difficult for us to find a supervisor for you.

Do all professors supervise in English? Not all. A useful indicator is whether a professor publishes in English. If a professor's website and publications are entirely in Japanese, they may not be in a position to supervise research in English.

I have research experience in an unrelated field. Should I include it? Yes. Evidence that you have successfully carried out research is always helpful. Experience in the field you intend to work in is more helpful still, because it shows familiarity with that field's methods.

Does a paper that is still under peer review count as a publication? No. A paper counts as a publication once it has been reviewed and accepted. You may still mention a paper under review in your research proposal.

Should my publication list include page numbers? Yes, better to include that kind of detail than not.

Visas, timing and scholarships

Several questions at the session concerned visas, the timing of offers and enrolment, and scholarships such as MEXT. The faculty panel was not in a position to answer these, because the details depend on your individual circumstances and on rules that the programme does not set.

Visas and the Certificate of Eligibility: successful applicants receive instructions from the university after admission. The university cannot extend or bridge a visa you already hold before you enroll. For anything beyond that, contact the GPEAK Admissions Office or a visa specialist.

Result dates, acceptance and enrolment-fee deadlines: see the current application guidelines, and confirm any deadline with the GPEAK Admissions Office.

Scholarships, including MEXT: GSP does not offer scholarships of its own. Each scholarship has its own schedule and eligibility rules, which are set by the funding body, not by GSP. Please consult the scholarship provider directly; the GPEAK Admissions Office can also advise on how scholarship timing fits with admission to GSP.

Studying at GSP: coursework, internships, TA/RA work, progression to PhD

Can I do an internship or work part-time while studying? It is possible. The two-year master's course is intensive, with coursework and a thesis, so any outside work must not interfere with your studies. In some cases an internship closely related to your research may be recognised for credit. Visa rules on working hours are a matter for the immigration authorities; please check them independently.

Can master's students work as teaching assistants or research assistants? GSP students have served as teaching assistants for undergraduate courses, and TA positions can be applied for when they are advertised. Research assistant positions depend on individual professors and are not guaranteed.

Is it common to continue from the master's to the PhD? Most students complete their studies at the master's level, but a significant minority continue to the PhD, and students who intend to do so are encouraged, though progression is not automatic: master's students must apply alongside external applicants.

Does GSP hold other events for prospective students, such as meetings with current students? Not at present. The information session is the main opportunity to put questions to the programme.

Still have a question?

For questions about required documents, English-test exemptions, visas, scholarships, fees, housing and deadlines, please email the GPEAK Admissions Office (office@gsp.c.u-tokyo.ac.jp).