

Answers to the Questions at the FY2021 KAKENHI Writing Seminar (July 30th 2021)

| # | Question | Answer/Comment |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | I have a question regarding the effort for the proposal. How much % should we put on? (Under 50% or over 50%) | It depends on your situation and the category you will aim for. You can contact your university's administration office or the URA office to see if there are some trends for similar position, etc. [Comments from Dr. Packwood] There are no clear rules for allocating effort, and it depends on how many on-going projects you have and your other university responsibilities. Anywhere between 30 - 60 % would be reasonable. |
| 2 | What is a lifespan of a research proposal? | Many of the KAKENHI categories call in the range 3-5 year project period, but differ among categories. You might want to plan your project period strategically with your research career. Please check the category which you wish to apply for details. https://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-grants/grants01.html |
| 3 | In case of 2nd PhD, can we apply for Wakate scheme is up to 8 years of 2nd Ph.D. degree? | No. The eligibility will count from the date you obtained your 1st PhD degree (period of maternity and childcare leave will be excluded from this count). |
| 4 | Is age a true criteria? What about researchers who started "late" in life? | Age is not the condition for eligibility in KAKENHI. However, you must have a valid e-Rad ID registered at your University or Institution to apply. Please contact your university administration office to check/apply your e-Rad status. |
| 5 | Is there an age limit for applicants? | |
| 6 | If I received my PhD relatively recently, within the last 8 years, but am in my 60s may I apply for Wakate? | For Wakate guideline, there is no age limitation but you will need a PhD degree. You must be within for 8 years limitation from obtaining your (1st) PhD degree, or must be prospected to be a PhD holder by April 1, 2022. |
| 7 | Is Wakate eligible for Master degree's holder? | |
| 8 | Can you apply for KAKENHI while you are JSPS fellow researcher (only 2~3 years Research position) | No, JSPS Research Fellow (DC) and JSPS International Research Fellow are not eligible for KAKENHI application. (see page 31 "Important Point 2" in the link below) There is a dedicated research grant program (Grant-in-Aid for JSPS Research Fellow[PD, DC, RPD] and JSPS International Fellow). https://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-grants/data/09/2022/r4_7_kobo_e.pdf |
| 9 | If anybody applied for JSPS Postdoc and KAKENHI at same time? If he succeed both, so he can continue both or should reject one? | You can apply for both JSPS Research Fellow and KAKENHI at the same time, but unless you are a JSPS Research Fellow (PD), you can only adopt one. To make sure, please consult your university's administration office before application. [Comments from Dr. Packwood] I recommend selecting the JSPS International Research Fellow over KAKENHI. |

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| 10 | Is there any foundations that PhD student could apply? | One example is the JSPS Research Fellowship for Young Scientist (DC1/DC2) Program for those who have been enrolled for a PhD program in Japanese Universities. Please check the following URL for details. https://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-pd/index.html |
| 11 | May I know how much impact the Budget section will carry in the proposal? | The budget section influences the validity of your research. If the budget is not allocated properly or logically, there will be a risk of getting a low score. |
| 12 | If a foreigner wants to mention about his or her career in his or her country after finishing the research in the proposal, does it affect negative in the selection? | You do not need to mention about your career plans after the grant period. There may be a risk of negative influence when you are in the "border-line" and the reviewer must find some factors to differentiate from other "border-line" applications to give you a score. |
| 13 | What do you receive as feedback from the KAKENHI application process? Do you get to know how you ranked? | You will receive your result via e-Rad system. If you are not selected, they will provide you with a ranking (A/B/C) among the unselected applications, your average score on each of the 3 individual elements, and the weaknesses in you application. [Comments from Dr. Packwood] Several sub-categories will be also listed (such as understandability of the project, budget allocation, etc.) and asterisks will appear beside categories where you were not evaluated well. |
| 14 | If a proposal is rejected, after revision, is it possible to use the same theme in the next year? | Yes, you can use the same theme for application again. However, you should revise the content to strengthen the weaknesses pointed out in the previous application and/or to consider applying for a more suitable review section to be evaluated. |
| 15 | How about Kiban-B and larger funds? What is the main difference in preparation? | For larger grants, you may need to show a larger research scope, your track record (publications, received grants, etc.), and your project/team management abilities to match the fund size. |
| 16 | Do you feel there is any bias against young researchers if they choose to apply for a higher level grant without previous successful lower level grants? | You might have difficulty in convincing your ability/track record to the reviewers. You might need to show other aspects to substitute your track record if you want to convince the reviewers. [Comments from Dr. Packwood] For larger budgets, you will also be evaluated on your ability to manage a large grant or a team. This may count against young researchers. |

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| 17 | If you get a start-up KAKENHI, can you submit a similar proposal for the next one? Like a continuation reusing most of the contents? | Yes. You are advised to build up on your achievements from your start-up KAKENHI to develop a new project. However, you must differentiate the new project from the previous one. You can also use the achievements as a promising preliminary data for your new project. |
| 18 | If I submit two KAKENHI (e.g. Wakate and Kiban B), both of them could be selected? | Please check the table of restriction before application. For example, you cannot apply for both Wakate and Kiban S/A/B/C at the same time. https://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-grants/data/09/2022/table_of_restriction_e.pdf |
| 19 | What is the difference between WAKATE A and B? | Wakate A/B category has been united to Wakate and is no longer available. |
| 20 | On the topic of Japanese vs. English, I was told it can be helpful to use the Japanese form but write in English. Slightly less daunting for the reviewer. | Thank you for your suggestion. |
| 21 | So, it is OK to mix Japanese heads and English text? | Yes you can. It might be nice to write the headers in Japanese to align with the keywords (i.e. 学術的背景、本研究の目的、etc.) to guide the reviewer's eyes. |
| 22 | Is the language of the application impact the score? Or, is there any difference in the evaluation system if we submit in English or Japanese? | The evaluation system is the same for both Japanese and English. Efforts to make your story easy-to-understand (format, guiding, language, etc.) to the reviewer will be more important compared to the language form. |
| 23 | Is it okay to write in dual-language (English and Japanese)? Does abstract in Japanese increase the chance to pass through the review, or at least catch reviewer's attention more easily? is it necessary to write in the Japanese and English as u showed in page-1? Because I've been hearing this from many colleagues, and the example presented here just strengthen that "rumor/suggestion" again. | Yes you can. However, as the space is limited, you might eat up the valuable space of your application if you have the same content in English and in Japanese. As have been pointed out in the talk, it might be wise to stick to (mostly) English unless you are totally confident with your Japanese. Instead of a full paragraph, showing the key words/phrases in Japanese might be a better option for effective use of Japanese. [Comments from Dr. Packwood] Because the abstract is short and 'stand alone' (i.e., can be understood in isolation from the main text), it is an easy target for translation into Japanese. However, remember that your major goal is to communicate clearly; a clear and well-written English abstract will beat a poorly written Japanese abstract. |
| 24 | Carryover of my remaining budget from this year to the next year in the case of Wakate is it possible? | You may carry over to the next fiscal year. However, in some categories and cases, it is not allowed. Please check thoroughly in the funding guidelines which will be provided to you when you are selected. |

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| 25 | Does the KAKENHI allow the recipients to change their research themes after receiving it? | <p>Basically, the recipients are expected to carry out the planned research and will be reviewed each year for their progress through the report. However, the research plan can be changed according to the progress as long as it is "within the scope of the research objectives".</p> <p>Regarding a "major changes(for example, a change in the research objective or a change in the title of the research project)", the recipients need to submit a revised Research Proposal Document. If the recipients would like to make a major changes, please consult in advance with your university's administration office.</p> <p>[Comments from Dr. Packwood] Your research direction may naturally change during your project, however when writing your final report you will need to explain how your results fall within the framework of your original proposal.</p> |
| 26 | What should happen if anybody want to quit job where he received KAKENHI? | <p>If you are moving to a position (with the valid e-Rad) at certified University/Institution, you can carryover your KAKENHI. Please consult your university's administration office before moving to see whether or not you can carry your KAKENHI with you.</p> |
| 27 | I worried about what's going on my KAKENHI, if I move my affiliation to abroad during the mid-term of KAKENHI? If I register my position as Kyoryoku Kenkyuin, my KAKENHI could be continued? | |
| 28 | What if a JSPS holder (Japanese type) applied for KAKENHI and in the same time would travel abroad to US, can we transfer the budget?? | <p>You cannot transfer your budget to overseas institutions. However, there are cases that you can suspend your KAKENHI and resume when you return. Please consult the administration office before planning to go abroad, to see if you can use this scheme.</p> |
| 29 | Who are the Reviewers? Peers? | <p>Peers in the applied review section will be selected to be your reviewers.</p> <p>[Comments from Dr. Packwood] The reviewers will be mid- to late-career researchers in your field.</p> |
| 30 | Is there any information of reviewers within the sections? | <p>Please use the past reviewers information to effectively choose your review section. (Sorry, only available in Japanese)</p> <p>https://www.jsps.go.jp/j-grantsinaid/14_kouho/meibo.html</p> |
| 31 | What if the proposal is borderline of different basic section ? In that case, how to choose? | |
| 32 | Regarding the review section, how do we know if the "medium section" and "broad section" is appropriate? Especially "broad section" is just A B C. | <p>Please check the review section table. All medium-sized review sections and basic sections have brief explanation to them.</p> <p>https://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-grants/data/09/2022/review_section_table_e.pdf</p> |

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| 33 | Selecting the right section for review is really important . Many get funded by just changing the section for review . Though this is difficult for interdisciplinary studies. Does JSPS have options for review of interdisciplinary studies? | It's a very tough question. An advice which we can provide is to check the past reviewers of candidate sections. You might want to make your story outline to clarify the key message of your plan and then strategically select the section according to who will show most interest to your story. [Comments from Dr. Packwood] This is very tough. I also work on |
| 34 | How to choose section if your topic is very interdisciplinary like "90110 biomedical-related"? It appears across two medium sections. | interdisciplinary topics. In my case, I will select several candidate sections and try to determine which one is most likely to appreciate the proposal. At present, there is no 'interdisciplinary' sections, unfortunately. |
| 35 | To follow up on the question of writing in both English and Japanese: If it's encouraged to use both, does that mean the reviewers are always going to be Japanese as a first language speakers, even for the "English" reviews? | The reviewer must be able to read and properly evaluate all of the assigned applications (majority of which are in Japanese). [Comments from Dr. Packwood] I think that almost all of the evaluators will be native Japanese speakers. I have never heard of foreign researchers acting as KAKENHI evaluators. |
| 36 | How many scientific questions that we may add to for Wakate and KAKENHI A,B,C | You would usually have a one key scientific question in an application. Several subthemes may be set to answer the question. |
| 37 | When you have a big career arc planned, do you recommend bringing it up in the same way each time, and say "in our last work, we demonstrated bla bla bla. Now, we are bla bla bla"? Would one even consider recycling some figures that describe the large career arc? I mean, what is the right balance between "this is new in this new proposal" and "this is what I'm interested in and ALWAYS been interested in"? | Yes, if the findings are essential to your research proposal. You should select the essential findings and align them in a way so that the reviewer can follow the logic behind your proposed project. Figures, data of the past findings can be used as evidences/your preliminary data. However, please don't forget to connect your story to a large issue in your research field if you want resonate your story with the reviewer. [Comments from Dr. Packwood] I think that it is fine to recycle text and figures, providing that they clearly communicate your current proposal. |

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| 38 | I wanted to ask about the demographics of accepted grant applications. How many were successful in each field (e.g. basic vs clinical or epidemiologic) and what studies get accepted best (e.g. quantitative vs qualitative or mixed method)? | <p>Please check the "Awards Trends" page in JSPS KAKENHI website. You can find the data on funding allocation by review section. Although the success rate is around the same, there are sections which attracts more applications, average allocation amount, etc.</p> <p>[Comments from Dr. Packwood] I also work on theoretical topics. Computation and theory are completely fundable, however you need to be very careful to frame your project within a bigger picture (one that includes potential impacts). While it is arguably more difficult to do this with theoretical projects, it is not impossible either. You also need to be careful to explain why you need the budget.</p> |
| 39 | Do you have any data on acceptance for theory vs. experiment based proposals? Based on my experience it seems like it's much less common to see funding for work that's purely computational/theoretical. | <p>https://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-grants/award_trends.html</p> |