

July 21, 2026

Dear Graduate Students,

**Call for Participants: Graduate Student Program,
Forum for Graduate School Education Reform 2026**

Rapid advances in AI, global challenges, and increasingly diverse values are making society more complex and uncertain. In this environment, doctoral talent with deep expertise and cross-disciplinary perspectives is essential to industry, government, universities, local communities, and the international community.

Since fiscal year 2012, the Forum for Graduate School Education Reform has brought universities across Japan together under the leadership of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology to share innovative educational initiatives and discuss graduate education. This year, Kyushu University will host the Forum for Graduate School Education Reform 2026 in December.

Under the theme “An Ecosystem for Doctoral Talent to Thrive,” this year’s Forum will bring together people from industry, government, universities, local communities, and the international community to discuss how to build a system in which doctoral talent can be nurtured on an ongoing basis and can fully contribute to society.

As one of the Forum’s main programs, this group presentation session brings together graduate students from different fields and universities to examine evidence, develop practical recommendations for improving doctoral student well-being, and present them to stakeholders in industry, government, and academia.

This is a unique opportunity to explore the challenges surrounding doctoral student well-being from multiple perspectives alongside peers from different fields. Through discussion and collaboration, you’ll broaden your perspective, share your ideas, and build new connections.

Please refer to the attached document for further details. If you’d like to take part, please apply using the form below by Monday, August 31. Please note that participant numbers may be adjusted if applications exceed capacity.

[Application Form]

<https://forms.office.com/r/XkzsHPYpHQ>

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Forum for Graduate School Education Reform 2026

Graduate Student Group Presentations — Implementation Overview

As one of the Forum's main programs, a student session led by graduate students will be held. In this session, graduate students from different fields and universities will work together to develop and present concrete, evidence-based recommendations on the important issue of improving the well-being of doctoral students. Rather than simply exchanging ideas and opinions, this program aims to draw on prior research and case studies to present actionable recommendations to a wide range of stakeholders, including government, industry, universities, graduate schools, academic supervisors, and families. Following the Forum, the outcomes will be compiled into a “Recommendations Report”, with the aim of making a lasting contribution to graduate education reform.

Program Overview

Graduate students—including those enrolled in the WISE Program and the Program for Leading Graduate Schools—will form groups of approximately 4–5 members. Drawing on empirical research and existing practices, each group will develop concrete, actionable recommendations for improving the well-being of doctoral students and present them to a range of stakeholders.

Schedule

Monday, August 31: Deadline for student recruitment

Thursday, October 1: Notification of group assignments and guidance on preparatory sessions

Friday, October 23, 18:00–20:00: Preparatory Session 1 (online)

Friday, November 20: Each group submits 5–6 draft recommendations

Friday, December 4, 18:00–20:00: Preparatory Session 2 (online)

Friday, December 18: Recommendations Development Workshop (preparing presentations)

Saturday, December 19: Presentation of Recommendations to Diverse Stakeholders

Venue

- Friday, December 18: TKP ELGALA Hall –Middle Hall (1-4-2 Tenjin, Chuo-ku, Fukuoka)
- Saturday, December 19: Same venue –Main Hall

Session Format

- Based on the results of the preliminary survey, participants will be assigned to groups according to their areas of interest related to improving the well-being of doctoral students (e.g., support for international doctoral students, support for doctoral students, and support for working professional doctoral students).

- During the first preparatory session (online), participants will receive an overview of the student session and meet with their groups to discuss their plans.
- Each group will review relevant research and case studies (including the use of AI), develop five to six evidence-based recommendations, and submit them by Friday, November 20.
- During the second preparatory session (online), each group will present its recommendations, followed by a voting session.
- On the first day of the Forum, the recommendations receiving the highest number of votes will be organized by stakeholder group (e.g., government, industry, universities, graduate schools, faculty members, and families) and integrated into a unified set of recommendations.
- On the second day of the Forum, each group will deliver a 5–10 minute presentation of its recommendations to stakeholders and receive feedback, followed by approximately 3 minutes of Q&A.

Language

English and Japanese. Each group will include a mix of Japanese and international students. Presentation slides should, in principle, include both English and Japanese.

Awards

There will be no awards. Rather than adopting a conventional ranking-based award system, this program emphasizes the development and publication of diverse recommendations that contribute to graduate education reform.

Use of Outcomes

- The final outcomes will be compiled into the "Recommendations for Doctoral Student Well-Being" and published on the website as a practical resource to support graduate education reform.

Other

- Participants are required to attend both days of the Forum in person.
- Students participating in the student presentation program will be invited to the reception beginning at 18:10 on Friday, December 18 (free of charge).

Graduate Education Reform Forum 2026 Overview

■ Dates & Schedule

Friday, December 18, 2026 1:40 PM - 5:50 PM Reception: 6:10 PM - 7:30 PM

Saturday, December 19, 2026 9:30 AM - 12:15 PM

■ Venue

TKP ELGALA Hall (1-4-2 Tenjin, Chuo-ku, Fukuoka)

■ Format

The forum will be held in person over two days, with selected sessions simultaneously streamed online.

■ Languages

Japanese (primary language), Simultaneous interpretation available in the main hall, Presentation materials and event communications provided in both Japanese and English

■ Theme

Building an Ecosystem for Doctoral Talent to Thrive in Society

■ Forum Background and Objectives

Rapid technological advances, including artificial intelligence (AI), the growing urgency of global challenges, and increasing diversity in values and perspectives have created an era of unprecedented complexity and uncertainty. In this context, doctoral talent, equipped with deep expertise, interdisciplinary perspectives, and the ability to integrate knowledge across fields, plays an essential role in driving innovation and creating value across industry, government, academia, local communities, and the international community.

However, the value of doctoral education and doctoral talent has yet to be fully recognized across Japanese society. To support sustainable social development and Japan's future growth, there is an urgent need to build an ecosystem in which doctoral professionals can thrive across diverse sectors, where their contributions are appropriately recognized and passed on to future generations. Such an ecosystem would enable doctoral talent to serve as a continuous driving force for innovation and sustainable development.

Realizing this vision requires reimagining the doctoral pathway, from enrollment and research activities to careers and contributions beyond academia, as part of a broader process of social value creation. Collaboration among industry, government, academia, local communities, and international partners is essential to creating opportunities for doctoral talent to address societal challenges and foster innovation. Industry engagement is particularly important, as doctoral professionals play increasingly significant roles in research and development, technology management, and innovation strategy.

The international mobility of doctoral talent is also vital to strengthening Japan's intellectual competitiveness and long-term sustainability. Creating environments in which talented researchers from diverse backgrounds can thrive will advance both global problem-solving and international collaboration. Equally important is the well-being of doctoral talent, including physical and mental health, psychological safety, and supportive research environments.

Through this forum, participants from industry, government, academia, local communities, and the international community will explore how to build a sustainable ecosystem that nurtures and empowers doctoral talent throughout its professional journey. Together, we will envision a future in which doctoral talent thrive and create lasting value for society.

Program (as of July 2026)

Day 1: Friday, December 18, 2026 @ TKP ELGALA Hall

Time	Program	
12:30–	Registration & Doors Open	
13:40–14:00 (20 min)	◆ Opening Remarks –Koichi Akashi (President, Kyushu University) –Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology –Japan Society for the Promotion of Science	
14:00–14:30 (30 min)	◆ Keynote Speech –Seishi Okamoto (Corporate Executive Officer and EVP, Head of Fujitsu Research, Fujitsu Limited)	
14:40–16:00 (80 min)	◆ Case Presentations & Panel Discussion The session will feature several distinguished speakers from diverse disciplinary and professional backgrounds, who will share their experiences and insights. Their presentations will be followed by a panel discussion exploring key themes and perspectives. Panelists: –Seishi Okamoto –Tadahisa Kagimoto (Representative Director, President and CEO, Healios K.K.) –Natalie Konomi (Vice-Director, Kyushu University / Professor, International Strategy Planning Office, Kyushu University) –Saori Yabumoto (Senior Researcher, Organization & Human Capital Strategy Division / Policy Research and Consulting Group, and CR Department Future Co-Creation Group, Mitsubishi Research Institute, Inc.) –Representative, University Collaboration Promotion Office, Innovation and Environment Bureau, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry	
16:20–17:50 (90 min)	◆ Student Workshop “Advancing Well-Being for Doctoral Students: Recommendations Development Workshop” (Open to Forum Participants for Observation)	◆ Special Session “Foreign National Doctoral Talent: Settling and Succeeding in Japan” Panelists: –Naoya Taniguchi (Special Assistant Professor, Career Support Division, Institute for Advanced Education, Nara Institute of Science and Technology / Representative, TRI-PhD SALON) –Aya Puka (Professional Career Development Program Specialist, Office of the Dean, Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology Graduate University / Deputy Representative, TRI-PhD SALON) –Kazuya Iseda (Manager, Energy Storage Research Institute, New Materials Business Development Center, Asahi Kasei Corporation) –Xing Zhu (Nissan Research Center, Nissan Motor Co., Ltd.)
18:10–19:30 (80 min)	◆ Reception	

Day 2: Saturday, December 19, 2026 @ TKP ELGALA Hall

Time	Program
9:00–	Doors open
9:30–10:45 (75 min)	◆ Graduate Student Presentations “Advancing Well-Being for Doctoral Students: Presentation of Recommendations to Diverse Stakeholders”
10:45–11:45 (60 min)	◆ Featured Guest Talk -Kazuto Ataka (Professor, Faculty of Environment and Information Studies, Keio University / Senior Strategist, LY Corporation)
11:45–12:15 (30 min)	◆ Closing Remarks