

Aqualogy Graduate Program Admissions: Frequently Asked Questions

I. Before Applying

Q1. Do I need to contact my preferred PI before applying?

A. This depends on the admission category.

Special Selection by Recommendation: You must consult your preferred PI before applying and confirm the proposed research area and the possibility of supervision.

General Selection: Prior contact with a PI is not required. However, you may contact a PI if you have specific questions about their research or research unit.

Q2. How should I choose a PI?

A. Please first review each PI's research interests and publications on the relevant websites. We recommend selecting PIs whose research is related to your academic background and the topics you hope to pursue in the future.

If you are unsure which PI would be the best fit, you may contact a PI by e-mail. Students may choose from research units led by the following seven PIs: Katsuya Teshima, Wataru Sugimoto, Hideki Tanaka, Takashi Hisatomi, Nobuyuki Zettsu, Tsuyoshi Shimosato, and Makoto Ogawa.

For applicants to the General Selection, final placement in a research unit will be determined after the laboratory rotations conducted following enrollment.

For details on the PI units, please visit: <https://www.shinshu-u.ac.jp/institution/arg/research/>

<https://www.shinshu-u.ac.jp/institution/arg/en/PR/#Message>

Q3. A PI has told me that I would be welcome in their group. Does this mean I will be admitted?

A. No. Prior consultation with a PI does not guarantee admission. Admission decisions are made by the Admissions Committee based on a comprehensive evaluation of the application materials and interview.

Q4. Can I apply even if I have not yet decided on a specific research topic?

A. Yes. You do not need to have a fully defined research topic at the time of application. Please describe your previous experiences, research fields that interest you, and questions or challenges you would like to explore in the future.

II. Application Documents

Q5. Must academic transcripts be submitted in English?

A. Please submit an English-language version whenever possible. If the certificates or documents to be submitted are written in other languages than English, attach a notarized "English translation documents – with notarized proof of translation", which is prepared by an official public notary organization such as the attended school or embassy.

Q6. My graduation certificate has not yet been issued. What should I submit?

A. If you are expected to graduate, please submit a Certificate of Expected Graduation. The official Certificate of Graduation must be submitted by the enrollment procedure deadline.

Q7. I do not yet have a passport. Can I still apply?

A. If you do not have a passport at the time of application, please contact the Aqualogy Program Office. A valid passport will be required after admission for visa-related procedures.

Contact: aqualogy.aqs-ml@shinshu-u.ac.jp

Q8. Is there a required format for the Letter of Recommendation?

A. No. The Letter of Recommendation may be prepared in free format. Please refer to the Recommendation Letter Guidelines for details. Applicants should contact their recommender well in advance and allow sufficient time for submission. Enter the recommender's name and email address correctly in the online application system. Shinshu University (The University) will send the recommendation request to the recommender in accordance with the application procedure. Please refer to the latest Application Guidelines for the official submission procedure and deadline.

Q9. What should I include in my CV?

A. Please refer to the Curriculum Vitae (CV) Writing Guidelines.

Q10. What should I discuss in the Video Statement?

A. Please refer to the Video Statement Guidelines.

Q11. What should I include in the Statement of Purpose (SOP)?

A. Please refer to the Statement of Purpose (SOP) Writing Guidelines.

III. English and Japanese Language Requirements

Q12. Are TOEFL or TOEIC scores required? Is there a minimum score?

A. Please refer to the latest Application Guidelines for the conditions under which an official English proficiency test score must be submitted. Some applicants, such as those who have completed a degree program conducted primarily in English, may be exempt from submitting a score. The Aqualogy Graduate Program does not set a minimum required score (cutoff score) for the designated English proficiency tests.

Q13. Is Japanese-language proficiency required?

A. No. Courses, research supervision, and seminars are conducted in English. However, learning Japanese is recommended to help you make the most of daily life in Japan. Japanese-language learning opportunities are also available for interested students.

IV. Interview

Q14. Will the interview be conducted online?

A. Yes. All applicants who pass the first-stage screening will be interviewed online, regardless of whether they are located in Japan or overseas. Please participate from a location with a stable internet connection.

Q15. What kinds of questions will be asked during the interview?

A. Questions may be based on your SOP, Video Statement, previous academic or research activities, motivation for applying, approach to research, and future goals. Particular emphasis will be placed on

international experience and the ability to connect local challenges with the global community and contribute solutions back to society. Your ability to explain your ideas and respond to questions will also be evaluated. The entire interview will be conducted in English.

Q16. How long is the interview?

A. The interview is expected to last approximately 30 minutes, although it may be extended depending on the circumstances.

Q17. Will I be required to give a presentation during the interview?

A. Yes.

Q18. Can I apply if my GPA is low?

A. Yes. Admission decisions are based on a comprehensive evaluation that considers not only GPA, but also the CV, Letter of Recommendation, SOP, Video Statement, interview performance, and future potential.

Q19. Is the GRE required?

A. No. GRE scores are not required.

V. Aqualogy Graduate Program

Q20. What is the integrated Master's-Doctoral program?

A. The Aqualogy Graduate Program is designed to educate and develop researchers continuously from the Master's stage through the Doctoral stage. However, students must satisfy the prescribed completion and progression requirements at each stage. Please refer to the latest Application Guidelines and relevant University regulations for details.

Q21. What is a laboratory rotation?

A. All students, including those admitted through the **General Selection** and the **Special Selection by Recommendation**, participate in laboratory rotations after enrollment. Students admitted through the **General Selection** rotate through the three laboratories they listed as their preferences in the application, spending approximately three to four weeks in each laboratory. The rotations provide opportunities to experience the research topics and working styles of different laboratories. Based on these experiences, as well as the student's preferences and aptitude, the principal supervisor (PI) and research topic will be determined. Students admitted through the **Special Selection by Recommendation** also participate in laboratory rotations. However, because their principal supervisor (PI) has already been determined at the time of enrollment, the rotations are **not intended to determine or change their principal supervisor**. For these students, the rotations are intended to broaden their interdisciplinary perspective by providing exposure to different research fields, approaches, and methodologies.

Q22. When will my principal supervisor (PI) be determined?

A. This depends on the admission category.

General Selection:

The principal supervisor (PI) will be determined after completion of the laboratory rotations, taking into account the student's preferences and aptitude, as well as consultation with the relevant PIs.

Special Selection by Recommendation:

Applicants consult with their prospective PI before applying and confirm the proposed research area and the possibility of supervision. Therefore, the principal supervisor (PI) is already determined at the time of enrollment.

Q23. Will I have opportunities to participate in international collaborative research?

A. Yes. The Aqualogy Graduate Program actively promotes international research activities, including collaborative research with overseas universities and research institutes and short-term research visits abroad.

Q24. What career paths are available after completing the program?

A. Graduates are expected to pursue a wide range of careers, including research and development positions in industry, universities and research institutes, start-up companies, government agencies, and international organizations.

VI. Admission, Enrollment, and Financial Support

Q25. What happens after I am admitted?

A. Successful applicants will receive information in stages about enrollment procedures, visa arrangements for international students, financial support, course registration, and orientation.

Q26. Should I enroll in April or October?

A. Applicants may choose either entry period. For students coming from overseas, October enrollment may provide more time to complete visa procedures and travel preparations.

Q27. Are there application, admission, or tuition fees?

A. No. The Aqualogy Graduate Program does not charge an application fee, admission fee, or tuition fees. Please refer to the latest Application Guidelines for official details.

Q28. Is financial support available?

A. Yes. The Aqualogy Graduate Program provides financial support to all admitted students. At the Master's stage, students receive a minimum level of financial support equivalent to JPY 1.2 million per year through non-repayable scholarships and employment on research projects. Please note that if you are receiving other scholarships or funding, the amount of support provided by the Department of Aqualogy will be determined after taking those awards into account. At the Doctor's stage, financial support of JPY 2.4 million per year is planned.

For details on the financial support, please visit:

<https://www.shinshu-u.ac.jp/institution/arg/en/achievements/financial-support.html>

Q29. Will the University support my visa application?

A. Yes. Shinshu University will assist international students with the procedures required to obtain the appropriate status of residence.

Q30. What should I prepare before coming to Japan?

A. Before enrollment, you will need to prepare your passport, visa, airline ticket, and other required documents. Detailed instructions will be provided after admission.

VII. Living and Student Support

Q31. Do I need to arrange accommodation before enrollment?

A. Yes. Students are expected to secure accommodation before enrollment, but the University will provide international students with housing information and support. During the first six months of the program, all students will be based primarily at the Nagano Campus and must therefore arrange accommodation in Nagano City. Students may also search for housing independently through a real estate agency or the University Co-op.

Detailed information about finding accommodation will be provided after admission.

Q32. Can I live with my family?

A. Yes. Students coming to Japan with family members will generally need to rent private family accommodation. Family members must also obtain the appropriate status of residence and visa to stay in Japan. The University will provide information on the required procedures. If you plan to bring family members, please contact the Program Office as early as possible.

Contact: aqualogy.aqs-ml@shinshu-u.ac.jp

Q33. How much does it cost to live in Nagano?

A. Living expenses vary depending on accommodation and lifestyle. For a student living alone, a reasonable estimate is approximately JPY 80,000 to JPY 120,000 per month. Nagano City is generally more affordable than major metropolitan areas such as Tokyo. These figures are estimates only; actual expenses will vary depending on individual circumstances.

Item	Estimated monthly cost
Rent	JPY 30,000-60,000
Food	JPY 25,000-40,000
Utilities and communications	JPY 10,000-20,000
Other expenses (daily necessities, transportation, etc.)	JPY 15,000-30,000

Q34. Will I receive assistance traveling from the airport to the University after arriving in Japan?

A. The University will provide international students with information to help them travel safely and smoothly after arriving in Japan. Before departure, students will receive guidance on suitable airports, public transportation, and access to the University.

Q35. Is there an orientation program for international students?

A. Yes. An orientation for international students is planned at the time of enrollment. It will cover topics such as enrollment procedures and course registration, student life and campus facilities, living in Japan, health insurance and administrative procedures, beginning research activities, safety management and research ethics, and the Aqualogy Graduate Program's education and research curriculum.

Q36. Can I manage daily life in Japan without speaking Japanese?

A. Yes. Japanese proficiency is not required at the time of enrollment because courses, research supervision, and seminars in the Aqualogy Graduate Program are conducted in English. English-language support is available on campus. However, Japanese may be needed in some situations, such as shopping, using public transportation, visiting a medical institution, or completing municipal procedures. Students are therefore encouraged to learn basic Japanese after enrollment. Japanese-language learning opportunities are available to help students gradually become more comfortable with daily life in Japan.

Q37. Am I allowed to work part-time?

A. The Aqualogy Graduate Program provides financial support so that students can prioritize their studies and research. Students are therefore expected to focus on their academic and research activities without relying on part-time employment. If a student wishes to undertake part-time work, it must not interfere with coursework or research activities. International students must also comply with Japanese laws and immigration requirements, including obtaining permission to engage in activities outside their status of residence where required. Details regarding financial support and the treatment of part-time employment will be provided separately after enrollment.

Q38. Are Japanese-language courses available for international students?

A. Yes. Shinshu University provides Japanese-language learning opportunities for international students and researchers. Supplementary Japanese classes are also offered to international students at the Nagano (Engineering) Campus. Course content, proficiency levels, schedules, and frequency may vary by academic year and campus. Registration information will be provided during orientation or by the relevant administrative office. Japanese courses are not a degree requirement for the Aqualogy Graduate Program, but students are encouraged to participate because Japanese proficiency can make daily life and job searching in Japan easier.

Q39. Can I participate in an internship?

A. Yes. The Aqualogy Graduate Program encourages students to participate in internships at companies, research institutes, local governments, overseas universities, and other organizations. Internships provide opportunities to understand how specialized knowledge can be applied in society and to develop future career pathways. Participation must be coordinated with the student's research plan and course schedule. Students must obtain prior approval from their principal supervisor (PI) and complete all required procedures. Paid internships, or internships involving working hours beyond those permitted under an international student's status of residence, may require additional immigration procedures. Please consult the relevant administrative office before participating. Some internships may involve a competitive selection process depending on eligibility requirements and the number of available places. Participation cannot be guaranteed for every student.

Q40. Is career support available after completion of the program?

A. Yes. Shinshu University provides career and employment support through the Center for Career Education and Support and other services. International students may also have access to support such as business Japanese training, career education, internships, and matching opportunities with regional companies. Within the Aqualogy Graduate Program, principal supervisors, faculty members, partner companies, and collaborating research institutions will support students in exploring diverse career paths, including universities and research institutes, corporate research and development, start-ups, government agencies, and international organizations. Neither the University nor the Program can guarantee employment. Students are expected to develop their specialized expertise, English and Japanese proficiency, communication skills, and research achievements in a systematic manner.

- Individual career and employment counseling

- Review of CVs, résumés, application forms, and other application documents
- Interview practice
- Career guidance and job-search workshops
- Access to job and internship information
- Company information sessions and networking opportunities with employers

【Contact】

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