

Art Research Center, Ritsumeikan University
MEXT International Joint Usage/Research Center
International Joint Digital Archiving Center for Japanese Art and Culture (ARC-iJAC)
Guidelines for FY 2026 International Joint Research

The Art Research Center (ARC), Ritsumeikan University, has since 1998 actively promoted joint research that integrates the humanities and innovative information technology with a focus on the digital archiving of Japanese cultural properties, both tangible and intangible. Selected as an International Joint Usage/Research Center by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan (MEXT), in FY 2019, the ARC provides an environment to further promote the creation of digital archives. By taking advantage of this environment, researchers can vigorously pursue research on Japanese culture, setting up their own digital archives.

From FY 2026, we shift our focus to the development of early career researchers who are pursuing digital humanities research based on digital archives they themselves create. Therefore, in place of the International Joint Research Projects with Research Funds (International Fixed Theme, International Open Theme, and Open Theme Projects) for which we have invited applications in the past, we are launching the new category of International Early Career Researcher Projects with Research Funds.

Meanwhile, we continue to welcome proposals on a rolling basis, year-round, for projects seeking the use of the Center's physical and digital facilities and resources for research or educational purposes i.e. "International Joint Research to Utilize the ARC Research Space (B),"¹ and for using the ARC Database System to host and provide access to research results or digital data, i.e. "International Joint Research to Disseminate Research Through the Database System (C)."²

1. The ARC Research Space designates the online systems provided by the Art Research Center that include ARC Database, ArcGIS Platform, and Digital tools that utilize AI.
2. The former replaces the previously-existing project categories "International Joint Research to Utilize the Center's Facilities and Equipment (D)" and "International Joint Research to Utilize the ARC System for Educational Purposes (E)," while the latter replaces the project category "International Joint Research to Utilize the ARC Research Space (Database System etc.) for Dissemination of Information" (F.)

Calls for Application: Categories of International Joint Research Projects

- (A) International Early Career Researcher Project (with Research Funds)(Call for Applications for FY2026 is closed.)
- (B) International Joint Research to Utilize the ARC Research Space
- (C) International Joint Research to Disseminate Research Through the Database System

Researchers in any Project category can continuously utilize the ARC Research Space and receive technical support from ARC at no financial cost. Each project is officially considered to run for one year. However, category (A) projects may be granted an extension if necessary depending on circumstances. Category (B) projects are welcome to reapply each year to continue the project. Category (C) projects will be automatically renewed each year unless the Project Leader requests otherwise.

- (A) International Early Career Researcher Project (with Research Funds)
(Call for Applications for FY2026 is closed.)

I. Eligibility

Eligible researchers include Master's students, PhD students / PhD candidates, or those who completed a doctoral degree within the past five years. Researchers affiliated with Ritsumeikan University are not eligible to apply (researchers who have obtained a degree/s at Ritsumeikan University but are not currently affiliated may apply).

II. Organization of a research team

1. A research team consists of either a single researcher (research leader) or a research leader and one or more co-researchers.
2. While we recommend that a faculty member of the ARC (excluding senior researchers, researchers, assistant researchers, and visiting collaborative researchers) is included in a research team as a co-researcher, it is also possible to apply without one: the ARC-iJAC Technical Support Board will be available for support. Successful applicants are encouraged to contact the Technical Support Board for more details.

III. Research period

April 1, 2026 - March 31, 2027 (expected)

IV. Amount of research funds

- a. International Early Career Researcher Project: A maximum of three hundred thousand yen
Research funds may be used to cover expenses necessary for conducting joint research (e.g., costs for archiving, costs for creating a database, travel expenses) in line with Ritsumeikan University's Guidelines for Research Funding Spending.
The management of the fund will be executed by the university's research office. For Research Projects continuing from the previous fiscal year, a final report must be submitted for the previous fiscal year, before research funds may be used in the new fiscal year.

V. How to submit a proposal

Please submit the application form online, at: (Applications are closed.)

Application deadline for A) International Early Career Researcher Projects with Research Funds:

15 December 2025, 12:00 noon (JST)

VI. Selection process and notification

Applications for A) International Early Career Researcher Projects will be evaluated by the International Joint Research Reviewing Committee of the Art Research Center. We will send out the evaluation results in mid-March 2026 by e-mail.

Applications for other Research Project categories will be evaluated by the International Steering Committee of the Art Research Center on a rolling basis. We will send out the evaluation results within 2-3 weeks.

Please note that we consider the following points when evaluating proposals:

- Whether a project utilizes the database system, digital research resources, and related research materials operated by the ARC to advance international joint research.
- Whether a project can make progress in constructing its own digital archive and develop research by utilizing the ARC Research Space.
- Whether the research plan and research expenses have been well thought out to achieve the research objectives.
- Whether a project is expected to engage in international activities.

VII. Research outcomes

A)

1. Project Researchers are to publish peer-reviewed articles in international journals, academic journals, or the like, and/or to publish academic monographs or co-authored volumes.
2. Project Researchers are to introduce their research projects at the ARC DAYS event (in late July / early August), and to present their research outcomes at the ARC-iJAC Annual Report Meeting (in February). They may also be asked to introduce their research activities and/or present their research outcomes at one of our International ARC Seminars, which are held twice a month.
3. Please actively disseminate your research outcomes in digital space, e.g., through online publication or construction of online databases.
4. Please submit a report on research outcomes (web form) at the end of the research period in March. We will publish the report on our website, in our bulletin, etc.
5. Copyrights related to the research outcomes (including database contents) belong to the authors, creators, or database builders.

*It is possible to control whether the database contents of your research project are made available to the public, only to other ARC project researchers, or only members of your own project.

VIII. Notes

1. Before submitting a research proposal, graduate students applying to be a research leader for International Early Career Researcher Projects shall, in principle, secure agreements from their supervisor, as well as from the co-researchers for their participation.
2. Incomplete applications, especially regarding the section detailing research expenses, will result in a deduction of points or an immediate rejection during the evaluation process.
3. In the case of misconduct, such as research misconduct or misuse of research funds, or in the case in which the ARC determines that the project shall interfere with the normal activities of the Center or cause significant disadvantage to the Center or the university, we may cancel the project.
4. As a rule, the ARC receives a research leader as a visiting researcher of the Kinugasa Research Organization, Ritsumeikan University – the umbrella organization to which the ARC belongs. The visiting researcher may use designated research facilities, equipment, and resources of Ritsumeikan University and the ARC in accordance with the rules of the university and the ARC. They can also freely use resources such as Ritsumeikan University Library databases used by the university's researchers by acquiring a Rainbow User ID.

IX. Contact

International Joint Digital Archiving Center for Japanese Art and Culture (ARC-iJAC)
Office of the Art Research Center, Research Office at Kinugasa Campus,
Ritsumeikan University

Tel: 075-465-8476 (office hours: weekdays 9:00-17:30)

E-mail: r-darc@st.ritsumei.ac.jp

(B) International Joint Research to Utilize the ARC Research Space

I. Eligibility

International Joint Research to Utilize the ARC Research Space: Research leaders of a joint research team must in principle be researchers affiliated with a university or research institution (including museum, gallery, library, etc.). This category is not limited to Early Career Researchers.

II. Organization of a research team

1. A research team consists of either a single researcher (research leader) or a research leader and one or more co-researchers.
2. While we recommend that a faculty member of the ARC (excluding senior researchers, researchers, assistant researchers, and visiting collaborative researchers) is included in a research team as a co-researcher, it is also possible to apply without one: the ARC-iJAC Technical Support Board will be available for support. Successful applicants are encouraged to contact the Technical Support Board for more details.

III. Research period

April 1, 2026 (or date of ARC registration of the Project) - March 31, 2027

IV. How to submit a proposal

Please submit the application form online:

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis year-round.

V. Selection process and notification

Applications will be evaluated by the International Joint Research Reviewing Committee of the Art Research Center. Evaluation results will typically be sent by e-mail within 2-3 weeks after receipt of the application.

Please note that we consider the following points when evaluating proposals:

- Whether a project utilizes the database system, digital research resources, and related research materials operated by the ARC to advance international joint research.
- Whether a project can make progress in constructing its own digital archive and develop research by utilizing the ARC Research Space.
- Whether the research plan and research expenses have been well thought out to achieve the research objectives.
- Whether a project is expected to engage in international activities.

VI. Research outcomes

1. Please actively disseminate your research outcomes in digital space, e.g., through online publication or construction of online databases. We encourage researchers to make the results of their research publicly accessible unless there are particular reasons not to do so.
2. Please submit a report on research outcomes (web form) at the end of the research period in March. We will publish the report on our website, in our bulletin, etc.
3. Copyrights related to the research outcomes (including database contents) belong to the authors, creators, or database builders.
4. Project Researchers are encouraged to publish peer-reviewed articles in international journals, academic journals, or the like, and/or scholarly monographs or co-authored volumes.
5. Project Researchers are invited, but are not required, to introduce their research projects at the ARC DAYS event (in late July / early August), and/or to present their research outcomes at the ARC-iJAC Annual Report Meeting (in February). They may also be asked to introduce their research activities and/or present their research outcomes at one of our International ARC Seminars, which are held twice a month.

*It is possible to control whether the database contents of your research project are made available to the public, only to other ARC project researchers, or only members of your own project.

VII. Notes

1. Before submitting a research proposal, research leaders are, in principle, expected to secure agreement from co-researchers for their participation.
2. Incomplete applications may result in rejection of the project during the evaluation process.
3. In the case of misconduct, such as research misconduct or misuse of research funds, or in the case in which the ARC determines that the project shall interfere with the normal activities of the Center or cause significant disadvantage to the Center or the university, we may cancel the project.
4. Research leaders or co-researchers are welcome, if they so desire, to apply through the ARC to be received as a visiting researcher of the Kinugasa Research Organization, Ritsumeikan University – the umbrella organization to which the ARC belongs. The visiting researcher may use designated research facilities, equipment, and resources of Ritsumeikan University and the ARC in accordance with the rules of the university and the ARC. They can also freely use resources such as Ritsumeikan University Library databases used by the university's researchers by acquiring a Rainbow User ID.
5. Researchers are permitted to serve as research leader for one (A) or (B) category project in a given fiscal year. For those wishing to continue as research leader in subsequent years, please submit an application to either continue the same project or to begin a new one under a new project name.

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E-mail: r-darc@st.ritsumei.ac.jp

(C) International Joint Research to Disseminate Research Through the Database System

I. Eligibility

International Joint Research to Utilize the ARC Research Space: Research leaders of a joint research team must in principle be researchers affiliated with a university or research institution (including museum, gallery, library, etc.). This category is not limited to Early Career Researchers.

II. Organization of a research team

A research team consists of either a single researcher (research leader) or a research leader and one or more co-researchers.

1. While we recommend that a faculty member of the ARC (excluding senior researchers, researchers, assistant researchers, and visiting collaborative researchers) is included in a research team as a co-researcher, it is also possible to apply without one: the ARC-iJAC Technical Support Board will be available for support. Successful applicants are encouraged to contact the Technical Support Board for more details.

III. Operation period

April 1, 2026 (or date of ARC registration of the Project) - March 31, 2027

(unless the project leader desires to halt the project, it will be automatically renewed to continue for the subsequent fiscal year.)

IV. How to submit a proposal

Please submit the application form online:

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis year-round.

V. Selection process and notification

Applications will be evaluated by the International Joint Research Reviewing Committee of the Art Research Center. Evaluation results will typically be sent by e-mail within 2-3 weeks after receipt of the application.

VI. Research outcomes

1. Please actively disseminate your research outcomes in digital space, e.g., through online publication or construction of online databases. We encourage researchers to make the results of their research publicly accessible unless there are particular reasons not to do so.
2. Copyrights related to the research outcomes (including database contents) belong to the authors, creators, or database builders.
3. Project Researchers may be asked to introduce their research activities and/or present their research outcomes at one of our International ARC Seminars, which are held twice a month.

*It is possible to control whether the database contents of your research project are made available to the public, only to other ARC project researchers, or only members of your own project.

VII. Notes

1. Before submitting a research proposal, research leaders are, in principle, expected to secure agreement from co-researchers for their participation.
2. Incomplete applications may result in rejection of the project during the evaluation process.
3. In the case of misconduct, such as research misconduct or misuse of research funds, or in the case in which the ARC determines that the project shall interfere with the normal activities of the Center or cause significant disadvantage to the Center or the university, we may cancel the project.
4. Research leaders or co-researchers are welcome, if they so desire, to apply through the ARC to be received as a visiting researcher of the Kinugasa Research Organization, Ritsumeikan University – the umbrella organization to which the ARC belongs. The visiting researcher may use designated research

facilities, equipment, and resources of Ritsumeikan University and the ARC in accordance with the rules of the university and the ARC. They can also freely use resources such as Ritsumeikan University Library databases used by the university's researchers by acquiring a Rainbow User ID.

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