

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 International Joint Research to Utilize the ARC Research Space and International Joint Research to Disseminate Research Through the Database System.

* 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.

I. Calls for Application: Categories of International Joint Research Projects

- (A) International Early Career Researcher Project (with Research Funds)
- (B) International Joint Research to Utilize the ARC Research Space
- (C) International Joint Research to Disseminate Research Through the Database System

A) International Early Career Researcher Projects last for one year. Based on the development of the project, one may apply to continue for a second year. Alternatively, it is possible to shift to category B) or C) and continue research without research funding provided by ARC-iJAC. For B) International Joint Research to Utilize the ARC Research Space, one can apply year after year. Projects in category C) International Joint Research to Disseminate Research Through the Database System are, in principle, automatically renewed each year. Researchers in any Project category can continuously and freely use databases and other digital resources (i.e., the ARC Research Space) and receive technical support.

II. Eligibility

- A) International Early Career Researcher Projects: 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).
- B) 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.

III. Organization of a research team

1. A research team consists of a researcher (research leader) or multiple researchers (research leader and 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.

IV. Research period

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

V. 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.

VI. How to submit a proposal

Please submit the application form online, at: <https://forms.office.com/r/Q6hW9NAVY4>

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

15 December 2025, 12:00 noon (JST)

VII. 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.

VIII. Research outcomes

A) International Early Career Researcher Projects (with Research Funds):

1. Project Researchers are to publish a peer-reviewed article in an international journal, academic journal, or the like, or publish a book.
2. Project Researchers are to present their research outcomes at the ARC-iJAC Annual Report Meeting (in February). Also, they 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.

A), B), and C) Projects:

1. Please actively disseminate your research outcomes in digital space, e.g., through online publication or construction of online databases.
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.

*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.

IX. Notes

1. For B) International Joint Research to Utilize the ARC Research Space, 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.
2. Before submitting a research proposal, research leaders shall, in principle, secure agreements from their supervisor (in the case of graduate students applying for International Early Career Researcher Projects) or the institution where they are affiliated (in the case of International Joint Research to Utilize the ARC Research Space) for the application, as well as from the co-researchers for their participation.
3. To foster the development of young researchers, we may ask you to allow graduate students of Ritsumeikan University to join the research project for B) International Joint Research to Utilize the ARC Research Space.
4. Incomplete applications, especially regarding the section detailing research expenses, will result in a deduction of points or an immediate rejection during the evaluation process.
5. 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.

X. Contact

Takuya Shimada (he, his, him)

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: 075-465-8476/075-466-3411 (office hours: weekdays 9:00-17:30)

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