

[NEWS RELEASE]

January 22, 2025
Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group, Inc.
Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation

Commencement of “University Researcher Support Program”

Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (President & CEO: Akihiro Fukutome, hereinafter "SMBC"), a subsidiary of Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group, Inc. (President & Group CEO: Toru Nakashima, hereinafter "SMBC Group") will launch a “University Researcher Support Program” in April 2025 to support the research activities of university researchers.

With the aim of developing human resources dedicated to solve social issues and to create new businesses and solutions, SMBC Group has been promoting the establishment of SMBC Kyoto University Studio (*1) in collaboration with Kyoto University for research and business creation based on social issues as well as the comprehensive partnership agreement with the University of Tsukuba (*2) to enhance the competitiveness of the university sector and build a new collaboration model between universities and financial institutions. In addition, the "University Sports Support Program," (*3) which started in August 2024, supports university sports clubs in their efforts to balance their ‘academics’ and ‘sports’. Through these various activities, we have been promoting initiatives in the fields of academic education and research, which can be considered the foundation for solving social issues and realizing the sustainable growth of society.

Due to perceived low levels of remuneration and instability of the employment environment for researchers, the rate of enrollment to doctoral programs in Japan has fallen year by year. Additionally, decrease in research funding has caused the international status of Japan's research capabilities to decline over the past decade. We believe that creating an environment where researchers can undertake a sustained exploration of themes according to their own intellectual curiosity over a medium- to long-term period without being burdened by anxieties about their future job security will not only result in the improvement of Japan's research capabilities and the advancement of human knowledge but will also lead to greater innovation in society, resolution of social issues, and ultimately, the reignition of Japan's economic growth.

In this program, SMBC will provide support to university researchers in the form of grants of up to five million yen per person per year for four years. Focusing on research examining the resolution of social issues, we plan to target researchers who are engaged in research aimed at commercialization and practical implementation as well as basic research which will lead to breakthroughs. In addition to financial support, researchers who are selected for this program will also receive support that SMBC Group is uniquely placed to provide, such as support for commercialization as well as finance/economics education, according to need.

For the selection of candidates, in addition to drawing on the insights and perspectives of SMBC Group as business institutions, we will conduct fair screening with cooperation from external academia partners.

Specific application guidelines for this program will be announced on the SMBC website around April 2025. We look forward to receiving applications from researchers who are willing to take on the challenge of conducting original research that will generate innovation and lead to the resolution of social issues.

*1 SMBC Kyoto University Studio

Please kindly refer to the news release: (https://www.smfg.co.jp/news_e/pdf/e20240606_01.pdf)

Website: (<https://smbckustudio.iac.kyoto-u.ac.jp/en/>)

*2 the comprehensive partnership agreement with the University of Tsukuba

Please kindly refer to the news release: (https://www.smfg.co.jp/news_e/pdf/e20240801_01.pdf)

*3 University Sports Support Program

Please kindly refer to the news release: (https://www.smfg.co.jp/news_e/pdf/e20240508_01.pdf)

END