

Call for Proposals: Ensemble Continuation Grants for Early Career Researchers 2026

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The Ensemble Project for Early Career Researchers in Tohoku University will provide research grants “Ensemble Continuation Grants for Early Career Researchers 2026” to promote collaborative research among multiple departments, mainly carried out by early career researchers affiliated with the “Alliance of Research Institutes and Centers, Tohoku University”. The “Ensemble Continuation Grants for Early Career Researchers 2026” provides grants for ongoing research that is expected to develop further, based on the budding research proposal “Ensemble Grants for Early Career Researchers”. In addition, the research groups that were unfortunately not selected for the “Ensemble Grants for Early Career Researchers” by random selection may also apply if the research proposals are expected to develop further. Applications from early career researchers are strongly encouraged. However, we also welcome researchers at any career stage if their affiliation meets the requirements in the application guidelines. We look forward to receiving your applications.

Application Guidelines

1. Period of research

From April 1, 2026 (scheduled) to March 31, 2027.

2. What is funded?

Research funds up to 1,000,000 yen will be provided for about two projects. After a certain period, the grants will be distributed to the departments of the Alliance of Research Institutes and Centers, Tohoku University.

3. Selection process

A decision will be made by vote at an online review meeting scheduled for February 20, 2026. For details, please refer to “(Supplementary material 2) Review meeting”.

4. Eligible research projects

Research proposals conducted by research groups that fulfill either of the following two conditions are eligible.

- Research groups that were selected for the “Ensemble Grants for Early Career Researchers” in FY2024 or FY2025.
- Research groups that were not selected in the random drawing for the “Ensemble Grants for Early Career Researchers” in FY2024 or FY2025. (excluding groups that did not pass the screening process).

In addition to meeting the above criteria, the research group must be expected to further develop or expand the scope of the research theme from the research proposal application of “Ensemble Grants for Early Career Researchers”. Research proposals in all fields are eligible, but transdisciplinary or interdisciplinary research is not required. The research project that has already been funded by other grants is not eligible. Only one application per person, including the representative researcher and co-researcher, will be accepted.

5. Eligible representative researcher

Applicants (representative researchers) should be postdoctoral researchers, research assistants, assistant professors, lecturers, or associate professors (including special appointments) who belong to each department of the Alliance of Research Institutes and Centers, Tohoku University. Applications from early career researchers are particularly encouraged. There are no restrictions on the job title or status of co-researchers. However, they are not eligible if it is clear that the group will no longer consists of members from more than one department for the majority of the

research period due to graduation or course completion.

6. Notes regarding application

<Group Composition>

- Herein, the “Alliance of Research Institutes and Centers” refers to Institute for Materials Research (IMR), Institute of Development, Aging, and Cancer (IDAC), Institute of Fluid Science (IFS), Research Institute of Electrical Communication (RIEC), Institute of Multidisciplinary Research for Advanced Materials (IMRAM), International Research Institute of Disaster Science (IRIDeS), Center for Northeast Asian Studies (CNEAS), Frontier Research for Interdisciplinary Sciences (FRIS), Advanced Institute for Materials Research (AIMR), Research Center for Accelerator and Radioisotope Science (RARiS), and New Industry Creation Hatchery Center (NICHe), International Center for Synchrotron Radiation Innovation Smart (hereinafter the same).
- In the case of concurrently serving (including the mentoring system of the Interdisciplinary Research Institute), it is not considered to be more than one department by itself, even if you are a member of a group with researchers belonging to a department of the Alliance of Research Institutes and Centers, Tohoku University, which is your main activity base. Please refer to “Supplementary material 2 Details of Research Group” and carefully ensure your research members.
- The applicant (representative researcher) must be able to use the university's budget management system in one of the departments listed above.
- New members may be added to the research group which you applied for the “Ensemble Grants for Early Career Researchers”. It is also acceptable if some members leave the group, as long as the main members remain. The reason for the change of members should be stated in the application.
- Applicants whose proposals were screened out in the previous “Ensemble Grants for Early Career Researchers” selection are also eligible to apply for “Ensemble Continuation Grants for Early Career Researchers 2026”. If there are any changes in members, please refer to “(Supplementary material 3) Details of Research Group” and carefully ensure your research members. If you are not sure whether your research group is eligible to apply or not, please contact the Project Working Group prior to the deadline.
- When students are included as joint researchers, different departmental affiliation from that of the representative researcher do not count as multiple departments if their research base (e.g., laboratory) is the same.
- If it is difficult to determine whether the composition of the members of the applicant's pri/associate is eligible for the application, please check with the Ensemble Project Working

Group (WG) well in advance of the deadline.

<Restrictions>

- Only one application per person (including the representative researcher and co-researcher) is allowed.
- The representative researcher and co-researcher who received the continuing grants last year will be excluded from this year's selection process (Table 1).

Table 1 Duplication restrictions

Applicant's status	Where to apply	FY2025 Ensemble Grants	FY2026 Ensemble Continuation Grants (this proposal)
Ensemble Continuation Grants (adopted last year)		NG	NG

<Other>

- In principle, amendments to the application form after submission are not permitted. Please be careful not to make any typos.
- If your application contains false information, you will be excluded from the random selection and no further applications will be accepted.
- The followings are examples of applications that do not meet the application requirements:
 - When the member composition does not fall under multiple departments. If you cannot make a clear judgment, please check with the Working Group well before the deadline.
 - When the representative researcher is not a postdoctoral researcher, research assistant, assistant professor, lecturer, or associate professor (including specially appointed or designated positions) belonging to any department of the Tohoku University Affiliated Research Institutes and Centers Collaboration.
 - When the prescribed application format is not followed.
 - When the minimum required description of the research content is not provided.
 - When the breakdown of necessary expenses lacks appropriate justification.

7. Application form and submission

Please complete the application form using the prescribed format, convert it to PDF, and submit it via the URL below by the deadline. For details of the application form, please refer to “(Supplementary material 1) How to fill out the application form”.

<https://forms.gle/VbLVu92RN2shHRTaA>

Deadline: January 30, 2026

8. Report on results

After the research period, you must submit a report on results. The deadline for submission is scheduled for May 2027. The report will be published on the website of Ensemble Project for Early Career Researchers. In addition, the applicants will be required to present the research progress and results at a workshop scheduled to be held during FY2026. When you publish your research results, please acknowledge support from the “Ensemble Continuation Grants for Early Career Researchers 2025”.

Please note that if you do not submit an achievement report or make a presentation at the workshop, your applications for both “Ensemble Grants for Early Career Researchers” and “Ensemble Continuation Grants for Early Career Researchers” in subsequent fiscal years will not be considered for review.

9. Change of affiliation of the representative or co-researchers

If the affiliation of the representative or co-researchers changes during the research period, please contact Tohoku University Research Institutes' Ensemble Project Working Group as soon as possible.

If, prior to application, it is already known that the affiliation of the representative researcher or co-researchers will change during the research period and this makes the research group ineligible under the application guidance, please refrain from applying.

10. Change of research period

Changes to the research period due to overseas assignment, leave, or similar circumstances of the representative researcher are not permitted. However, flexible accommodations—such as changing the representative researcher—may be considered. Please contact the Ensemble Project Working Group in advance.

11. Management

You are required to conduct your research in accordance with all regulations and guidance

provided by the Tohoku University and your department regarding health and safety management, network management, prevention of research misconduct, compliance with laws and regulations, and related matters. If any deviations from these rules are found, the support will be terminated.

12. Contact us

Ensemble Project for Early Career Researchers in Tohoku University Working Group

Email: [ensemble_secretariat \[at\] grp.tohoku.ac.jp](mailto:ensemble_secretariat@grp.tohoku.ac.jp)

(Supplementary material 1) How to fill out the application form

1. Research subject

Please provide a concise title that clearly reflects the content of the research.

2. Research group

Please list the names, affiliations, positions of the representative researcher and co-researcher(s), and principal activity departments (research institutes, laboratories, etc.). Increase/decrease the “co-researcher” column as necessary.

If you are concurrently engaged in other departments due to dual appointments or concurrent positions, please be sure to list them in the “Affiliation and position (if you are concurrently engaged in other departments)”. For members affiliated with Frontier Research for Interdisciplinary Sciences (FRIS), please indicate the department of the mentor in the same column. If the member belongs to more than one department, please list the main department in which you reside in the “Principal activity department (if you are concurrently engaged in other departments)” section. There is no page limit for this item.

3. Research project

Based on the application for the “Ensemble Grants for Early Career Researchers”, please provide the background, details, and progress of the research you have conducted to date. Please explain the need to assemble a team and the responsibilities of each member. If there have been any changes in the members of the research group since you applied for the “Ensemble Grants for Early Career Researchers”, please explain the reasons in this section. Moreover, describe the research plan, methods, and expected results of the research to be conducted under this grant. If you have already received other research funding for a similar research project, please explain the differences between this application and the previous one in the appropriate section. The maximum length of this item is 2 pages. You may use figures and tables (color is acceptable).

4. Budget

Research expenses should be divided into the following categories: equipment, supplies, travel, honorarium/personnel expenses, and other expenses. Provide the amount and a detailed breakdown for each category. The expenses are limited to those necessary for carrying out this research. Expenses for laboratory operations or expenses that should be reasonably be charged to other research funding are not acceptable. There is no page limit for this item.

(Supplementary material 2) Review meeting

The review meeting will be held as follows.

1. The review meeting
 - Date: February 20, 2026
 - Venue: Online (The Zoom URL will be informed to participants)
 - Deadline for application: January 30, 2026

2. Method of presentation
 - The application form will be made available to all participants in advance.
 - Each proposal has 20 minutes (10 minutes for presentation + 10 minutes for Q&A).
 - Presenters must be either the representative researcher or co-researcher

3. Voting procedure
 - The review will be conducted by voting, and voting rights will be given to:
 - (1) Members of the Ensemble Project Working Group, and
 - (2) Representative researchers or co-researchers who applied for the continuation grant.
 - Representative researchers and co-researchers are not allowed to vote for their own research proposals.
 - Voting is permitted only for those who attended all presentations (attendees will be identified for each presentation).
 - One vote per research group is obligatory (regardless of whether the voter is the representative researcher or co-researchers). Groups that fail to vote will be excluded from selection. Please note that votes cannot be cancelled if more than one vote is cast within a research group.

(Supplementary material 3) Details of research group

A research group must consist of a representative researcher affiliated with a departments of “Alliance of Research Institutes and Centers, Tohoku University” and member(s) from multiple departments within Tohoku University. If the principal activity departments of all members are the same, it is not considered as a multi-departmental group. If they meet the above criteria, members from other universities may be included. There is no limit to the number of members.

- Examples of research group

	NG	OK
e.g.	Representative researcher (RIEC)	Representative researcher (RIEC)
	Co-researcher1 (RIEC)	Co-researcher1 (IMR)
Reason	The group is not composed of multiple departments.	The group is composed of multiple departments.

	NG	OK
e.g.	Representative researcher (RIEC)	Representative researcher (RIEC)
	Co-researcher1 (RIEC)	Co-researcher1 (Graduate School of Engineering)
	Co-researcher2 (Other university)	Co-researcher2 (Other university)
Reason	The group is not composed of multiple departments in Tohoku University.	The group is composed of multiple departments in Tohoku University.

	NG	OK
e.g.	Representative researcher (RIEC)	Representative researcher (RIEC)
	Co-researcher (including students) (Graduate School of Engineering /RIEC)	Co-researcher (including students) (Graduate School of Engineering /IFS)
Reason	The group is not composed of multiple departments in	The group is composed of multiple departments in

	Tohoku University.	Tohoku University.
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	NG	OK
e.g.	Representative researcher (RIEC, XX lab.)	Representative researcher (RIEC, XX lab.)
	Co-researcher (including students) (Graduate School of Engineering /XX lab.)	Co-researcher (including students) (Graduate School of Engineering /YY lab.)
Reason	The principal activity departments of all members are the same, and the group is not composed of multiple departments in Tohoku University.	The group is composed of multiple departments in Tohoku University.

	NG
e.g.	Representative researcher (RIEC)
	Co-researcher1 (IMR, RIEC) ※The principal activity departments is RIEC
	Co-researcher2 (AIMR, RIEC) ※The principal activity departments is RIEC
Reason	The principal activity departments of all members are same, and the group is not composed of multiple departments in Tohoku University.

- The case of research group members affiliated with FRIS

The project working group consider that the “mentor department” of researchers affiliated with FRIS is as principal activity departments. Please note that even if their mentor departments are different, groups consisting of researchers belonging to only FRIS are not eligible.

	NG
e.g.	Representative researcher (FRIS) ※The mentor department is Graduate School of Engineering
	Co-researcher1 (Graduate School of Engineering)
Reason	The group is not composed of multiple departments.

	NG
e.g.	Representative researcher (FRIS) ※The mentor department is Graduate School of Engineering
	Co-researcher1 (FRIS) ※The mentor department is Graduate School of Science
Reason	The group is not composed of multiple departments.