



Support for University Reform

Enhancing the Quality of University Research and Education

21st Century COE Program

Based on a MEXT report entitled “A Policy for the Structural Reform of Universities,” this program was established in 2002 to cultivate a competitive academic environment among Japanese universities by giving targeted support to the creation of world-standard research and education bases (centers of excellence). By thus raising the standard of both education and research at them, the program seeks to elevate Japanese universities to the world’s highest echelons, while fostering people of talent and creativity who will be qualified to assume roles as world leaders.

Features

Applications are prepared and projects conducted under the leadership of the university president so as to give stronger impetus to the establishment of education and research COEs that can be expected to produce innovative and breakthrough results by pioneering novel research domains.

Application

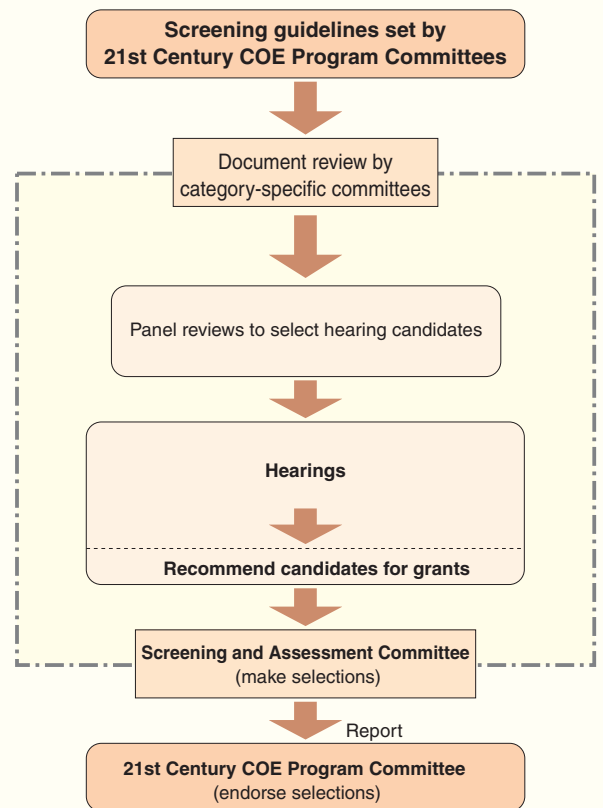
Proposals are expected to have a distinctive COE development plan and a proactive scheme for implementing it under a management system led by the university president.

Screening and Assessment

Under the 21st Century COE Program Committee, a screening and assessment committee and category-specific subcommittees are established to perform application screening and project assessment functions.

A three-tier review process is used in screening applications.

3-Tier Screening Process



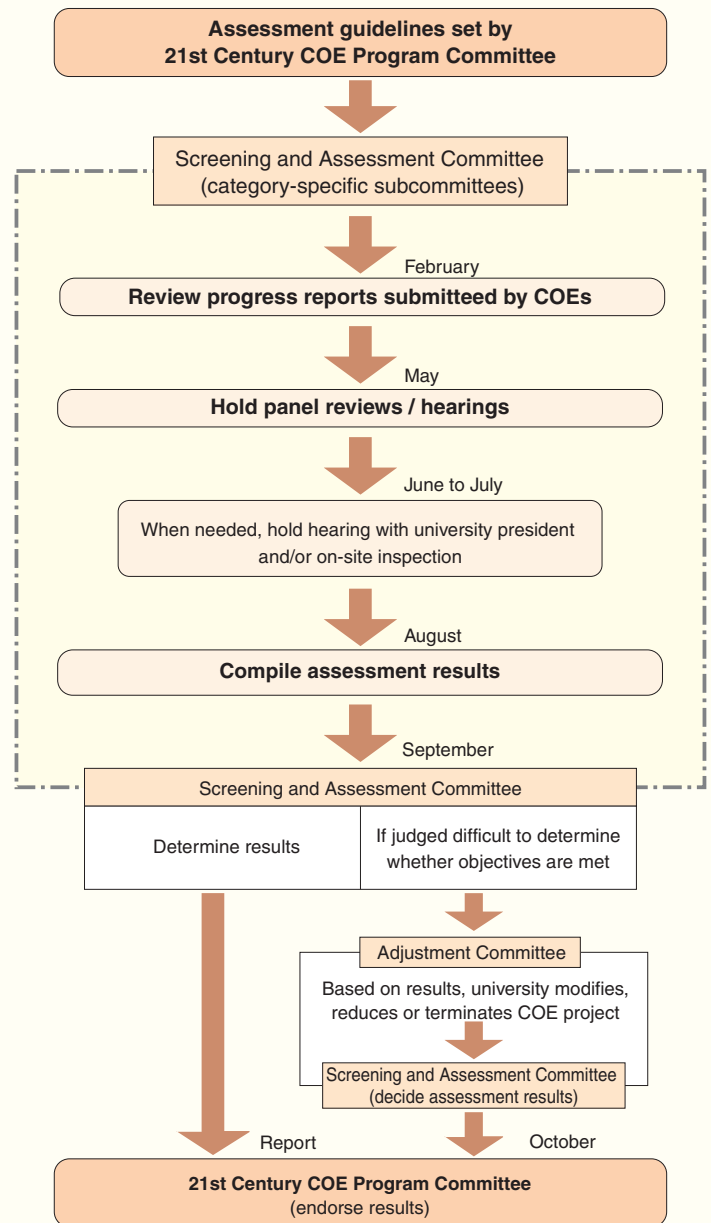
Number of Selections

FY	Grants: 113 Applications: 464				
	2002	Life sciences: 28	Chemistry, material science: 21	Information sciences, electrical and electronic engineering: 20	Humanities: 20
FY	Grants: 133 Applications: 611				
	2003	Medical sciences: 35	Mathematics, physics, earth sciences: 24	Mechanical, civil, architectural and other engineering fields: 23	Social sciences: 26
FY 2004	New scientific fields		Grants: 28	Applications: 320	

Project Assessment

Projects continue for five years, with their performance assessed at the 2-year point to determine whether continuation is warranted. The Program Committee reports the interim and final project assessments to MEXT, which uses the information to optimize the distribution of grant funds in the next program period. These assessment results are fed back to the project teams in a spirit of advice to help them develop their COE programs.

Project Assessment Process



Budget

FY 2006: ¥37.8 billion

¥130 million/year per project

Website

<http://www.jsps.go.jp/j-21coe/>

Initiatives for Attractive Education in Graduate Schools

Based on a MEXT report titled "Graduate Education in a New—Era Building Internationally Competitive Graduate Programs," this program was newly established in 2005. Aimed at improving the quality of graduate education in Japan, the program places emphasis on strengthening the role of universities in fostering creative, highly motivated young researchers who will be able to meet the evolving needs of contemporary society. Support is given to projects that have excellent program and curriculum development schemes, while the successful results of these projects are widely disseminated and used to improve overall graduate education in Japan.

Framework

Eligible applicants: Graduate departments or combinations of graduate departments.

Project period: Two years, after which a post-project assessment is conducted.

Eligible academic fields: All fields divided into three categories: humanities and social sciences; science, engineering and agriculture; and medical sciences.

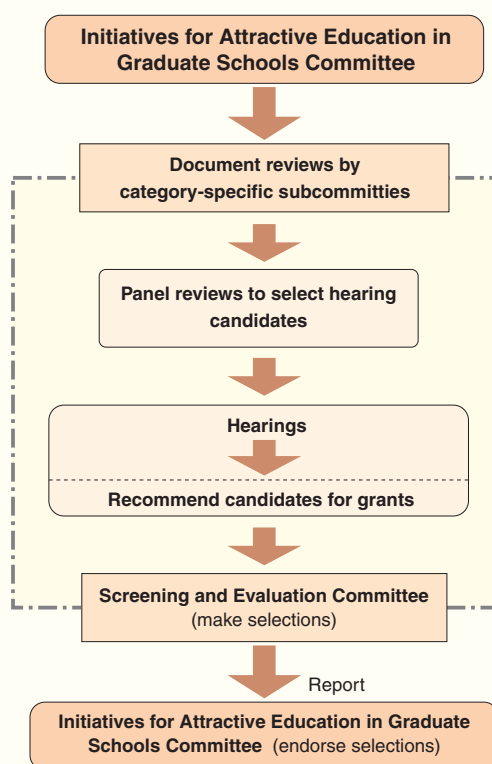
Project scale: Up to ¥100 million per fiscal year, inclusive of up to ¥50 million of annual subsidies.

Proposals are submitted by university graduate schools and PhD-level departments or consortiums of them.

Selection procedure

A screening committee and category-specific subcommittees carry out a three-tier review process.

- Document review
- Panel review
- Hearing



Applications versus Selections

Category	FY2005		FY2006	
	Applied	Selected	Applied	Selected
Humanities and Social Sciences	100	35	69	16
Science, Engineering and Agriculture	168	43	139	19
Medical Sciences	70	19	60	11
Total	338	97	268	46

Budget

FY2006: ¥4.2 billion

Webpage

<http://www.jsps.go.jp/j-initiative/>