

Tenure-Track Faculty Positions at the Graduate School of Arts and Letters,
Department of Death & Life Studies / Practical Religious Studies

Open Position Summary

Position	Assistant or Associate Professor
Open Positions	1
Employment Type	Tenure-Track, 5-year term
Location	Graduate School of Arts and Letters, Tohoku University Sendai, Miyagi
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ph.D. at the time of appointment• Outstanding achievements in the field of religious studies, psychology, anthropology, or thanatology• Ability to communicate effectively in both English and Japanese
Application Method	https://jotform.com/253000946333449
Deadline	January 31, 2026
Start Date	October 1, 2026

Contact: opencall-dls@grp.tohoku.ac.jp

Overview

The Graduate School of Arts and Letters at Tohoku University fosters a wide range of fundamental research in the humanities and social sciences. Building on the core fields that have developed from this foundation, the School is dedicated to promoting interdisciplinary, cutting-edge research and education that address contemporary societal challenges. As part of a new approach towards faculty recruitment, Tohoku University seeks to fill an open faculty position with a candidate with outstanding research achievements and international visibility. The successful candidate will lead research projects and conduct collaborative research with the “Advanced Research Hub,” an interdisciplinary center that transcends traditional disciplinary boundaries, with the goal of significantly enhancing both research capabilities and societal impact in these fields.

The Department of Death & Life Studies / Practical Religious Studies explores, both academically and practically, ways to address pressing issues surrounding life and death in a super-aged society experiencing a rising number of deaths, particularly in contexts such as disaster response, healthcare, and social welfare. Following the Great East Japan Earthquake, the department began training clinical religious specialists in 2012. Drawing on the wisdom accumulated in religious traditions about life and death, the department has distinguished itself through its commitment to cultivating practitioners who provide “care of the heart”—including active listening, grief support, and spiritual care—and implementing such practices in society.

The system for chaplains, religious professionals who provide emotional and spiritual care, and the concept of spiritual care itself originally developed within Christian societies in Europe and North America. At the same time, contemporary issues related to disasters, medicine, and social welfare are challenges that must be addressed from a global perspective, including the in contexts of Asian countries.

The Clinical Thanatology and Religion Research Project seeks a mid-career researcher who is well-versed in the issues of emotional and spiritual care in secularizing or post-secular Western societies, who can analyze Japan’s unique developmental trajectory from an international perspective. Candidates should have experience conducting research and presenting internationally and be capable of contributing to the creation of a world-leading research hub in clinical thanatology.

Position Details

This position is part of the UREX-Tohoku Project (University for International Research Excellence), a university-wide initiative to strengthen Tohoku University’s research capabilities.

The school invites applications for one open tenure-track assistant or associate professor position for outstanding early- and mid-career researchers who are eager to grow professionally.

The tenure-track term is five years, and a tenure review will be conducted by the end of the fourth year. Candidates are expected to demonstrate high standards of research achievement that contribute to strengthening the university's research mission in order to be considered for tenure.

Affiliation:

Tohoku University Graduate School of Arts and Letters, Department of Global Humanities, Comparative and Cross-Cultural Studies Course Group (Death & Life Studies / Practical Religious Studies)

Job Duties:

Research and education in Death & Life Studies / Practical Religious Studies or a closely related field

Research and Office Space:

Successful candidates will be allocated a dedicated office space within a Tohoku University campus

Qualifications:

1. Ph.D. at the time of appointment
2. Ability to communicate in both English and Japanese at a level sufficient to conduct research, and capable of teaching, supervising research, and carrying out administrative duties in Japanese
3. Proven track record of research in fields such as religious studies, psychology, anthropology, and thanatology with the following research themes: (1) understanding the historical development of religious care in Christian cultural contexts in Europe and North America; (2) understanding the development of interfaith care in multicultural societies such as the United States and clarifying contemporary challenges; and (3) conducting international comparisons of the structures of treatment and care cultures in secular societies using a medical-anthropological approach.

Start Date:

October 1, 2026, or the earliest possible date thereafter

Working Conditions:

1. **Salary:** Annual salary will be determined based on performance and length of experience in accordance with Tohoku University regulations.
2. **Employment type:** Full-time
3. **Term:** Tenure-track term of five years. Tenure will be granted upon successfully passing the tenure review conducted by the end of the fourth year.

4. **Working hours:** This position is subject to the Discretionary Labor System for Professional Work. The standard working hours are from 8:30 a.m. to 5:15 p.m., but actual working hours are left to the discretion of the appointed candidate.
5. **Days Off:** Saturdays, Sundays, national holidays, and New Year's holiday (December 29 to January 3)
6. **Social Insurance:** Appointees will be enrolled in the MEXT Mutual Aid Association (health insurance), employment insurance, and workers' accident compensation insurance.
7. **Accommodation:** Appointed candidates are eligible to move into staff accommodation if there are vacancies at the time of appointment.

How to Apply:

Please start your application by submitting the registration form linked below:

<https://jotform.com/253000946333449>

Please prepare following information as it will be needed in your application:

- Name
- Email Address
- Current Affiliation and Title
- Position you are applying for
- Scopus Author ID (if available)
- ORCID iD (if available)
- Researchmap URL (if available)

After registering, you will be sent links to your Application Form and Reference Information Form. Please upload your submission materials to the Application Form as separate PDF files. In the Reference Information Form, you will be asked to enter the names, email addresses, affiliations, and titles of three referees.

Submission Materials:

1. Cover Letter
2. Prescribed format resume (with photo)
Available for [download here](#)
3. Complete list of research (please divide into papers, books, and other sections, and mark three major publications)
4. List of research funding acquired
5. List of talks at international conferences
6. Summary of research activities (please include your three major research achievements)
7. Research plan related to the Clinical Thanatology and Religion Research Project

Letters of Recommendation:

Please request letters of recommendation from three researchers not affiliated with Tohoku University. Referees should submit their letters of recommendation directly through the application system. Letters sent by the applicant cannot be accepted. After submitting the names, email addresses, affiliations, and titles of three referees on your Reference Information Form, they will be sent a link to submit their letters directly. Please contact them beforehand to inform them of the process and ask them to upload their letters as PDF files by the deadline.

Deadline:

January 31, 2026, 24:00 JST

Contact Information:

Graduate School of Arts and Letters, Death & Life Studies / Practical Religious Studies
Recruitment

Email: opencall-dls@grp.tohoku.ac.jp

Selection Process:

1. The screening committee will conduct interviews via Zoom for candidates who successfully pass the document screening.
2. For the final screening stage, in-person interviews will be conducted. Travel expenses will be covered by Tohoku University.
3. Candidates may be asked to give a presentation as part of their interview.
4. Candidates may be asked to submit additional documents regarding their achievements.
5. Applicants will be promptly notified of the selection results once a decision has been made.

Additional Information:

- Tohoku University has established a support system to assist the spouses of qualified faculty members in finding employment opportunities for academic and non-academic jobs within the university. For more information, please contact the recruiting department.
- Tohoku University promotes activities to increase Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) and encourages people of varied talents from all backgrounds to apply for positions at the university.

Tohoku University's website about the DEI Declaration can be found here:

<https://dei.tohoku.ac.jp/en/vision/about/>

- Pursuant to Article 8 of the Act on Securing, Etc. of Equal Opportunity and Treatment between Men and Women in Employment, Tohoku University shall, as a measure for increasing the presence of women among the academic staff, prioritize the hiring of women deemed qualified for each job opening, based on impartial evaluation.
- Tohoku University has published 'Tohoku University-Live as Who You Are-Guidelines for Gender and Sexual Diversity' to provide explanations and details of how those at the university should respond with respect to diverse sexuality. The purpose of the guidelines

is to create an environment in which all students, faculty, and staff respect diverse sexuality in their academic, research, and professional activities. Please see the Tohoku University Center for Gender Equality Promotion website.

https://dei.tohoku.ac.jp/en/vision/consulting/for_minority/

- Tohoku University has the largest on-campus childcare system of all Japanese national universities. This network comprises three nurseries: Kawauchi Keyaki Nursery school (capacity: 22) and Aobayama Midori Nursery school (116), both open to all university employees, as well as Hoshinoko Nursery school (120), which is open to employees working at Tohoku University Hospital. In addition, Tohoku University Hospital runs a childcare room for mildly ill and convalescent children which is available to all university employees.
- See the following website for information on these and other programs that Tohoku University runs to assist work-life balance, to support researchers, and to advance gender equality, including measures to promote childcare leave among male employees. Center for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Tohoku University Website:
https://dei.tohoku.ac.jp/en/vision/consulting/for_family/

Human Resources and Planning Department website (Japanese text only):
<https://c.bureau.tohoku.ac.jp/jinji-top/external/a-4-kosodate/>