

AUA-THU SDG Scholars Program 2026-2027

Application Guidelines

September 2026

1. BACKGROUND

Complex challenges of sustainable development—from climate change and public health to green economies and social equity—require collective, cross-border academic efforts. Initiated by Tsinghua University (THU), the AUA-THU SDG Scholars Program is dedicated to promoting international academic exchange and collaboration among AUA member universities, with a concentrated focus on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By facilitating the mobility of scholars, the program aims to build a robust network of researchers dedicated to generating actionable solutions and fostering a shared vision for a sustainable future across Asia and beyond.

The initiative is supported by a generous donation to THU by Envision Energy, a world-leading green technology company that provides renewable energy system solutions for global enterprises, government and institutions.

In 2026-2027, the program aims to fund 10 distinguished scholars from AUA member universities to conduct a 3- to 6-months residential academic visit and joint research at other AUA member universities. This includes 5 outgoing scholars from Tsinghua University, who may choose to visit 2-3 AUA member universities beyond the Chinese mainland during their fellowship period, and 5 incoming scholars from other AUA member universities to be hosted by Tsinghua University. Each scholar will receive a funding of RMB 45,000 up to RMB 75,000 to cover travel, accommodation, and research-related expenses during the visit.

2. FUNDED AREAS

The proposed academic visit should contribute to advancing joint research in one or more of the following priority areas aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

- SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy (particularly in the areas of generation-grid-load-storage, new power systems, green fuels, and green computer power)
- SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities (particularly sustainable transportation systems, sustainable urban development and human settlements)
- SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production (particularly enabling technologies for the circular economy)

- SDG 13: Climate Action

3. FUNDING

The program intends to support 10 scholars in the 2026-2027 cycle. Each selected scholar may receive a funding of RMB 45,000 up to RMB 75,000 to cover international travel, accommodation, and research-related expenses incurred during the 3- to 6-month residential academic visit.

Funding will be provided according to the following scale:

- 3 months or longer but less than 4 months: RMB 45,000
- 4 months or longer but less than 5 months: RMB 55,000
- 5 months or longer but less than 6 months: RMB 65,000
- 6 months or longer: RMB 75,000

The funding will be provided to the successful applicant according to the relevant financial regulations of Tsinghua University.

4. ELIGIBILITY OF APPLICANTS

The program is open to scholars who meet the following requirements.

- a) Employment: The applicant must be employed as a full-time faculty member or researcher of an AUA member university.
- b) Host university: The host university of scholars from AUA member universities outside the Chinese mainland must be Tsinghua University. The host university of THU scholars must be an AUA member university outside the Chinese mainland.
- c) Research plan: The applicant must provide a detailed joint research plan to be conducted during the academic visit to the host university (see the application form). Other academic activities during the visit may include giving lectures and academic talks, attending academic conferences and workshops, and joint-supervising postgraduates.
- d) Program dates: All academic visits are required to be scheduled *between 1 January 2027 and 28 February 2028*.
- e) Duration: The academic visit shall last for 3 to 6 months.

5. EXPECTED OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

AUA-THU SDG Scholars are expected to achieve all of the following outcomes:

1. **Academic Engagement**: Deliver at least one lecture, seminar, or academic presentation per month during the visit. The presentation materials (including

posters and slides) must explicitly acknowledge the support of the AUA-THU SDG Scholars Program.

2. **Research Outputs:** Submit at least one of the following, with appropriate acknowledgement of the support of the AUA-THU SDG Scholars Program.
 - A co-authored academic publication;
 - A joint patent application;
 - A joint application for external research funding;
 - A documented plan outlining the timeline and pathway toward one or more of the outputs above.
3. **Sustainable Collaboration:** Develop a concrete plan for continued collaboration between the home and host universities beyond the funded visit period.

6. APPLICATION

Applicants must send their application package, including the materials as listed below, to thuglobal@tsinghua.edu.cn. Please note that one complete set of application materials is required for each host university you apply to. All applications must be submitted by the deadline of **31 October 2026**.

- a) An application form (doc format)
- b) Statement on AUA-THU Scholar Application signed by the applicant (PDF format)
- c) A supporting letter from the applicant's home university (PDF format)
- d) A supporting letter from the applicant's host professor(s) (PDF format)
- e) A most updated curriculum vitae of the applicant (PDF format)
- f) A most updated curriculum vitae of the applicant's host professor(s) (PDF format)

7. ASSESSMENT

Upon receiving all the application materials, the AUA Secretariat will invite experts of relevant fields from Tsinghua University to form a steering committee to assess the applications and decide who will be funded and how much funding will be allocated to each successful applicant. The selection criteria will include:

- a) Alignment with the program's priority scope
- b) Quality of research collaboration proposal
- c) Academic background and strength of the applicant

- d) Compatibility and complementarity between the applicant and the host
- e) Previous collaborations between the applicant and the host
- f) Expected outcomes and foreseeable impact

8. REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

- a) The AUA-THU SDG Scholars are expected to conduct the academic visits as stated in their Application Forms. Once awarded, THU-AUA SDG Scholars are not allowed to change their host professors or the host universities.
- b) The AUA-THU SDG Scholars must comply with the rules, procedures, and research ethics applicable at both their home universities and host universities throughout the program.
- c) The AUA-THU SDG Scholars are required to complete the *AUA-THU SDG Scholars Program (2026-2027) Academic Visit Summary and Review* (doc format and PDF format) and submit it to thuglobal@tsinghua.edu.cn within two weeks after it ends.

9. CONTACT

Questions regarding the application of AUA-THU SDG Scholars can be sent to thuglobal@tsinghua.edu.cn.