

Government to Fund Graduate Study Abroad

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Caps (some decorated) of graduates. **John Walker**

The government is offering to finance the education of Russian graduate students at the world's top universities in the fields of technology, science and medicine, on the condition that program participants return to work in Russia — or pay huge fines.

Grants of about 1.5 million rubles (\$45,000) a year will be available to each of 3,000 or so Masters or Ph.D. students over the next three years, the Strategic Initiatives Agency, which runs the program, said on its website.

Eligibility is limited to students admitted for graduate study at only about 200 of the world's top universities, and in the fields that the Russian government deems particularly important — including technology, science and higher-education management, and medicine — the Strategic Initiatives Agency said.

Applicants who plan to focus on studying robotic technologies, drone engineering and medical technologies are particularly welcome, the director of the agency's Young Professionals program, Dmitry Peskov, told Vesti FM radio on Monday.

Participants in the program will be required to work in Russia for three years after graduation or pay the government back all the grant money they had received, plus damages for the breach of contract. The damages will reach twice the amount of the grant, Vedomosti reported on Monday.

Funding may be available starting this year, though details of the program are still being finalized. President Vladimir Putin signed a decree in late December, giving the government three months to hammer out the details of the program.

Prospective grant recipients must take care of their own graduate school applications, and then may apply for government funding once they are admitted.

The government is expected to allocate 4.5 billion rubles over the next three years to finance the education of about 1,000 students admitted to the program annually, news reports said.

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